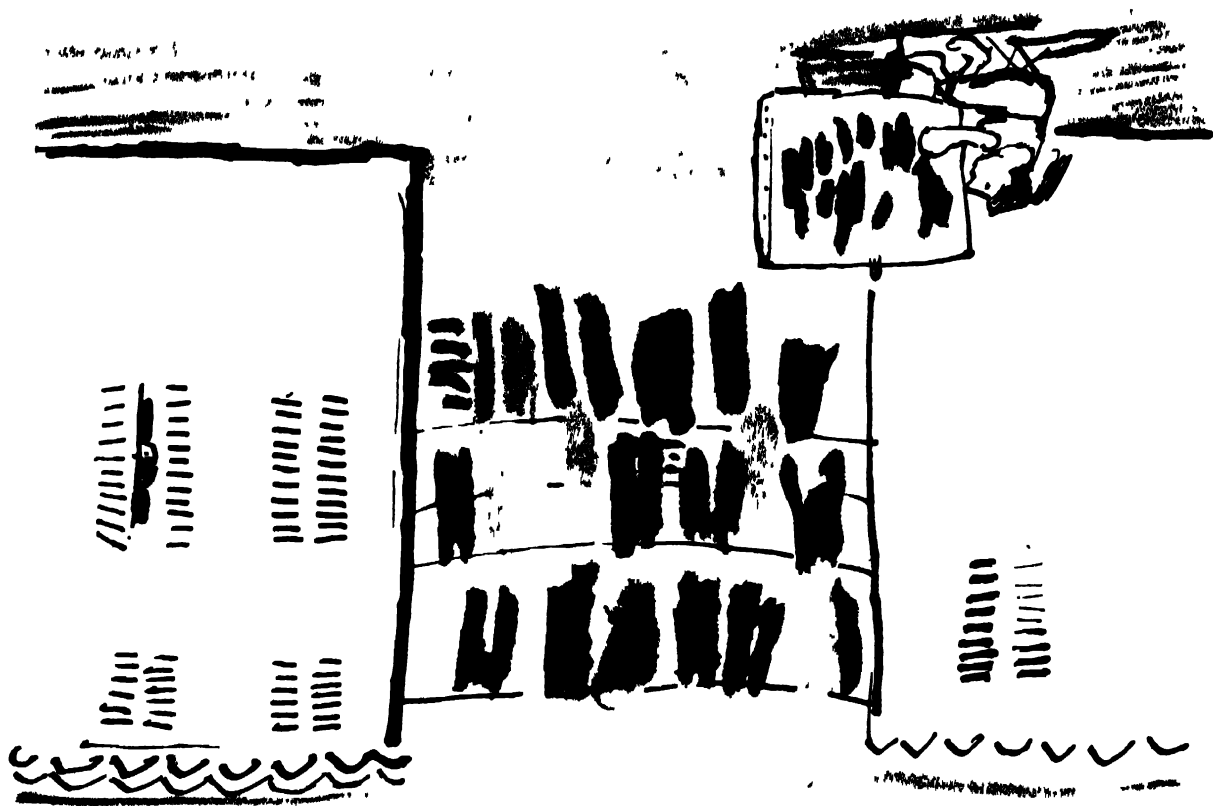
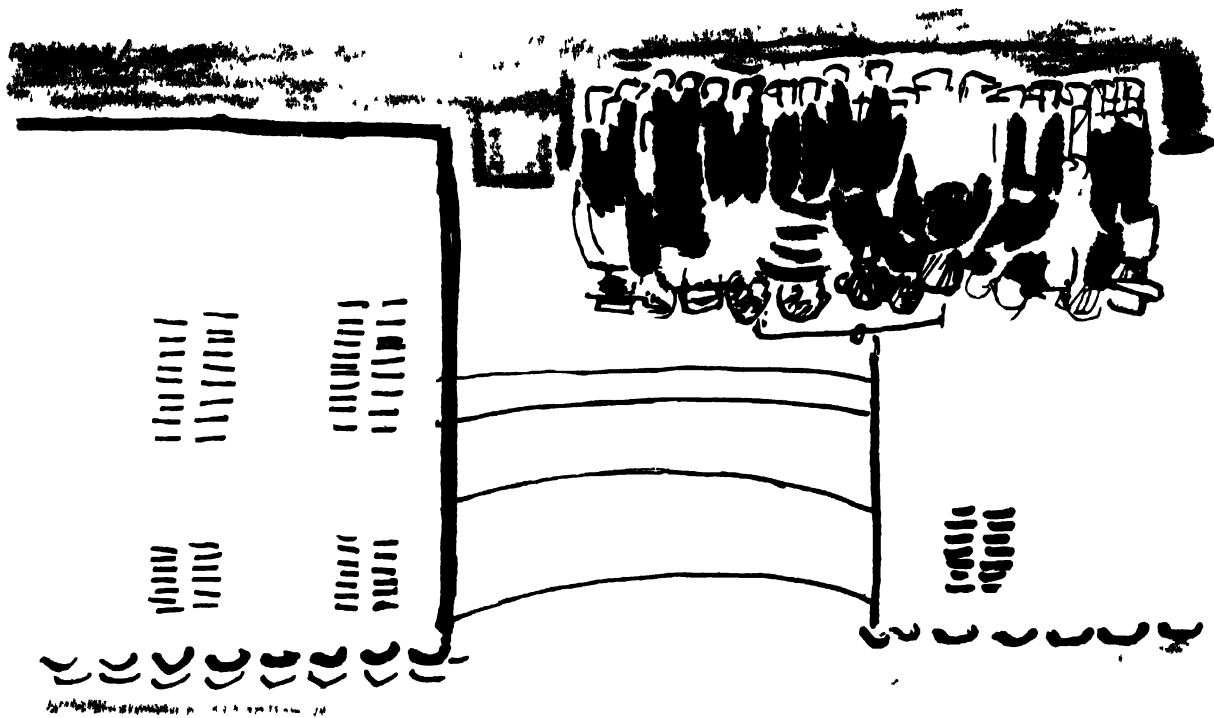


**Please handle the book carefully.**

## **THE PICK OF PUNCH**



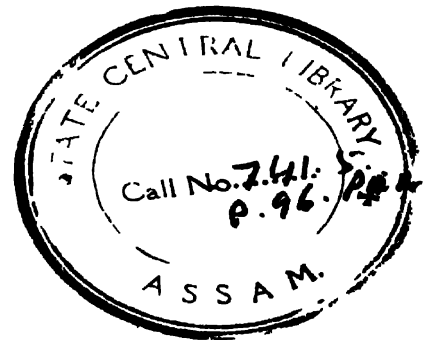
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# THE PICK OF PUNCH

AN ANNUAL SELECTION

★

EDITED BY  
NICOLAS BENTLEY



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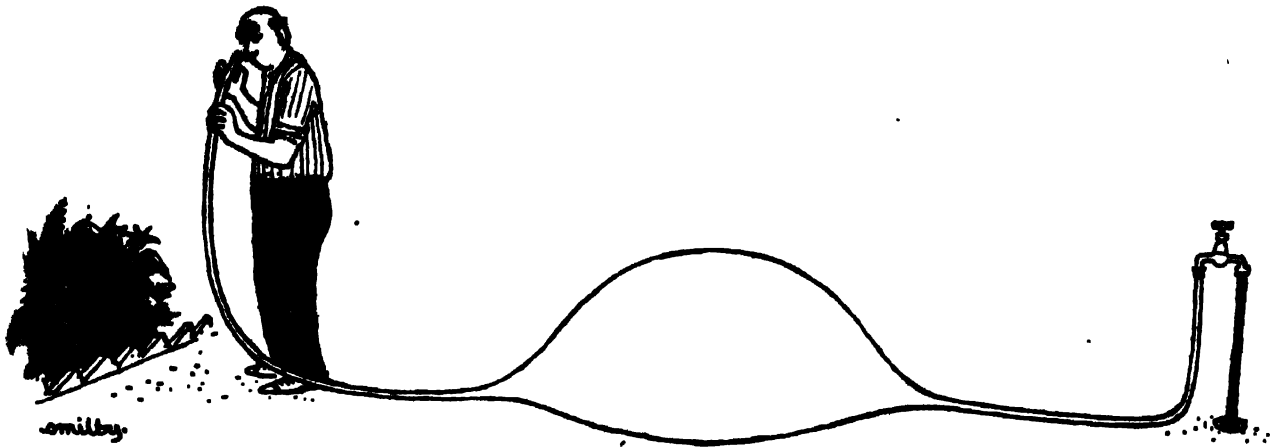
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## Onwards and Upwards with the Fiends

GOD bless my soul, I don't know when I have been more pleased than when I read in the paper the other day that Mr. Sax Rohmer had sold the radio, television and film rights of his famous character Doctor Fu Manchu to a motion picture company for four million dollars. It is not that the price is particularly high—I shall get about that for writing this article—the significant thing is that it shows that one of those trends has popped up. What so braces me on learning that Doctor Fu Manchu has hit the jackpot—apart from my esteem for Sax Rohmer, who when we were both younger endeared himself to me by writing a story about a liftman who was born at Downham and educated at Uppingham—is that it shows that the bad days are over and Fiends in Human Shape back in the money again. I can remember the time when you couldn't open a magazine without flushing half a dozen fiends in human shape. Then for some reason the bottom dropped out of the racket and they were down in the cellar with no takers. Now the bull market has started once more, and the man cheering and waving his hat in the crowd is me. You can't, in my opinion, have too many fiends in human shape about the place.

I suppose the first F.H.S. I ever came across was Professor Moriarty. As a boy, he thrilled me. (I don't

mean when he was a boy, I mean when I was a boy.) He curdled my blood on the printed page, and he curdled it again on the stage. (Gosh, that protruding face, forever slowly oscillating from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion!) But more recently, I must confess, keeping a wary eye out for the thunderbolt which Christopher Morley and his fellow Baker Street Irregulars will probably hurl at me, I have come to the conclusion that the Professor was not so hot.

Sherlock Holmes calls at Doctor Watson's house and speaks of this Moriarty in high terms. ('He is the Napoleon of Crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He has a brain of the first order.') He then tells how he is on the point of dishing the Professor—'I have woven my net round him until now it is all ready to close'—and explains that the Prof., taking umbrage at this, is using all the resources of his vast organization to destroy him. 'Watson,' he says solemnly, 'on my way here I was attacked by a rough with a bludgeon!' A rough with a bludgeon! Gad, sir, if I were a fiend in human shape with a brain of the first order I would think up something a little better than roughs with bludgeons.

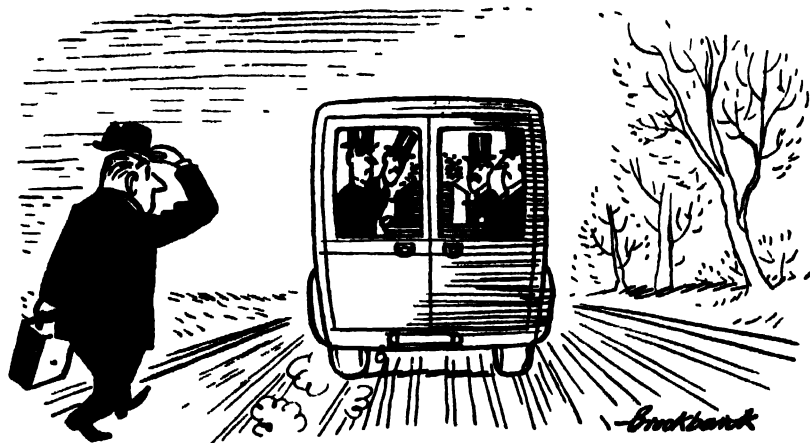
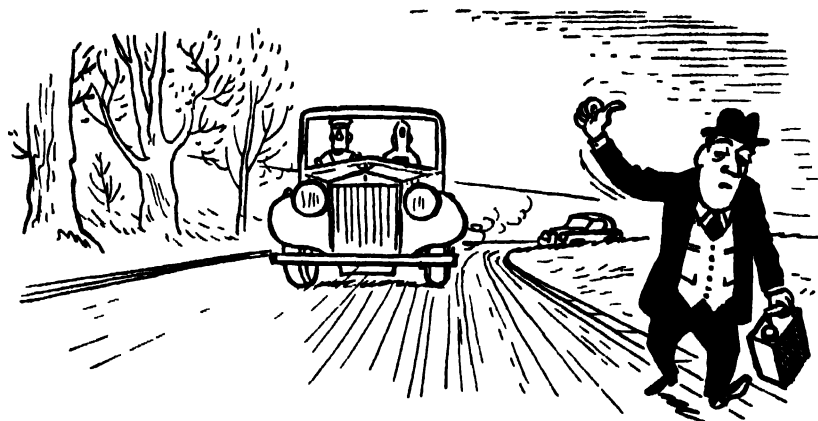
But my chief complaint against these fiends is that

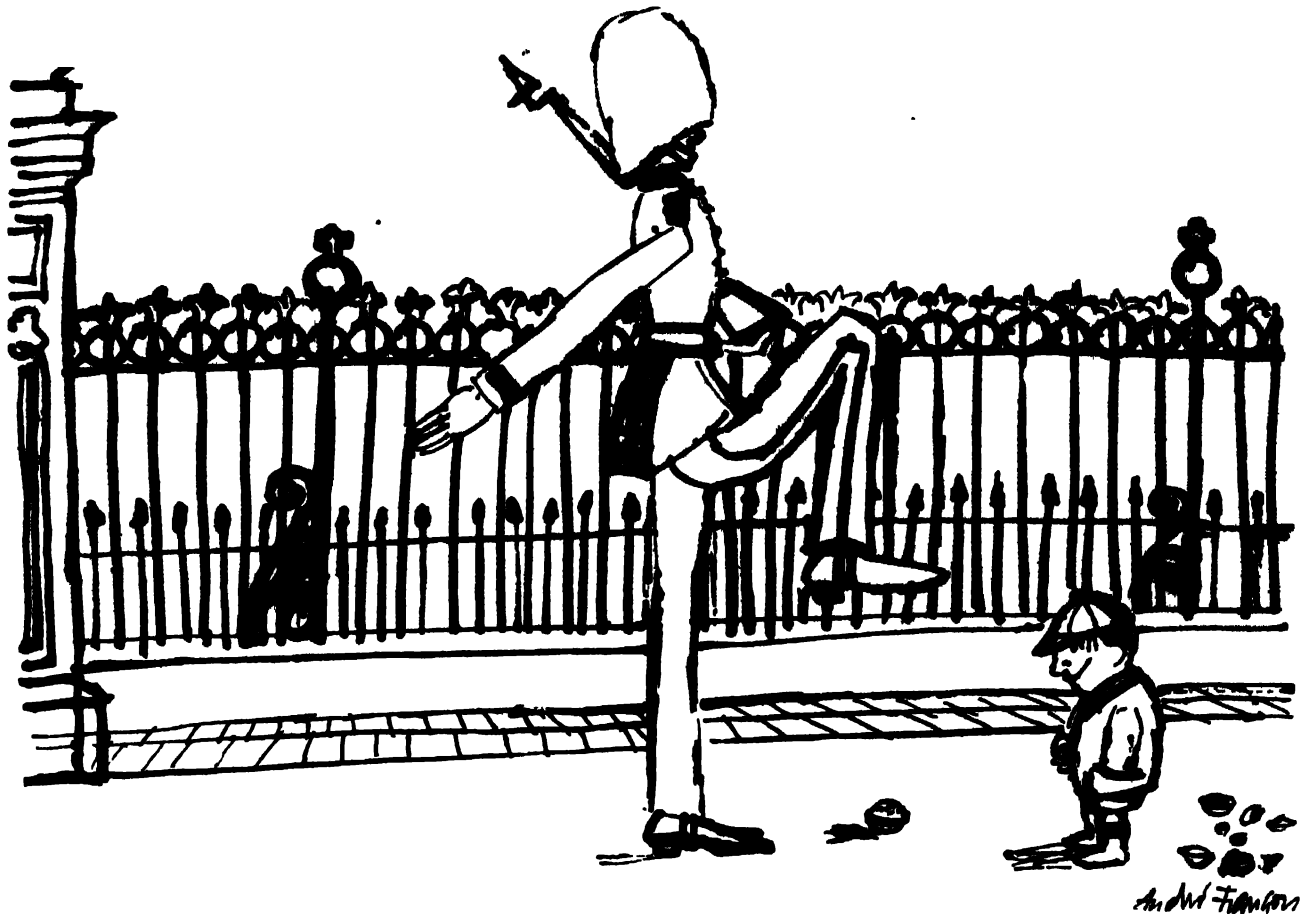
they don't know how to spend their money. The way I look at it is, it's no good sitting motionless like a spider in the centre of its web and having your agents rob banks and steal jewels and secret treaties—which is where the big profit is these days, no income tax—if you don't get anything out of it. When I set up as a Napoleon of Crime and have got my organization going and the cash starts rolling in, I shall do myself well. I shall make a splash. A flat in Mayfair, a house in the country, a shooting box in Scotland, a yacht, a racing stable, a villa on the Riviera, some decent cigars and a new razor blade every morning . . . all that sort of thing. But what does Professor Moriarty do? If he isn't working out problems on a

blackboard in Pinner (or some similar suburb, for Holmes speaks of 'ten miles away') you will find him in an underground gas chamber in Stepney. That's no way to live.

Fu Manchu's case is a little different. True, he pigs it in the bowels of the earth, far below the level of the Thames, under Sam Pak's, a Limehouse resort of evil reputation, but his job necessitates keeping a lot of furnaces going which have to be fed with human flesh, and for that you do need privacy. But I can find no excuse for Professor Moriarty. The best we can pencil in on his mid-term report is, 'Works hard. A trier.'

I suppose, really, the fact is that to be a Grade A





fiend in human shape you have to be a Chinaman. Then you have the advantage of slanting eyes which sometimes are horribly filmed like nothing human or imaginable and can whisper sibilantly. Reading the Fu Manchu stories, one can understand why the United Nations are so reluctant to have Red China joining the party. Let Red China into the U.N. and first thing you know its representative is popping a wire cage over you and dropping rats into it. ('Cantonese rats, Dr. Petrie, the most ravenous in the world. They have eaten nothing for nearly a week. You know my partiality for dumb allies. You have met my scorpions, my death-adders, my baboon men . . .') It seems to me that it would ruin the whole cosy atmosphere. ('What is that curious object crawling along the floor, Lodge? A scorpion?' 'Looks to me more like a death-adder, my dear.' 'Most un-

pleasant.' 'Most. I always said it was a mistake giving Red China a seat.'))

Nor do fiends, if Chinese, stop at scorpions and death-adders. I have met one who could open double-locked doors just by looking at them and another who could take a ginseng root, rub it a little and turn it into a human being which 'leaped from between the sorcerer's fingers, ran a little way and hid, panting.' You don't want that sort of thing going on when you are trying to listen to Mr. Gromyko. Still, I'm glad you're back, Fu, old fiend, with your Cantonese rats and your baboon men. Heaven speed the cobras you drop down people's chimneys, and if you want to destroy the world with that Death Ray of yours, go to it, boy. It's not much of a world anyway.

P. G. WODEHOUSE

# I Was Crawfie's Grocer

PERHAPS I really should admit right at the very beginning (to clear up any possible misconceptions, as the saying goes!) that it might be a *little* nearer the actual sober truth if I were to say I was Crawfie's *mother's* grocer. Or, indeed, for all I know, her father's, or her aunt's. I don't want to be accused of exaggeration. And, when I think of it, I wasn't *strictly speaking* her grocer at all, but her grocer's *assistant*, which as you will agree is a very different thing. The credit for being Crawfie's actual *grocer* must go to Mr. Simmonds.

## TREASURED MOMENTS

Nor do I want you to think for one moment that I wish to *boast* of my association with a figure who is after all almost as much a legend as Mrs. Dale. It was, I suppose, strictly speaking, the merest chance that caused our paths to cross. And I must be the first to admit that it may not have been Crawfie at all, although I do like to think so—don't you?

However, be that as it may, the die is cast, and I am embarked upon my series, and the first thing I must say is, oh, how sorry I am I didn't have the foresight to take any snapshots! Ah, when I think of the opportunities I might have had, had I but had a camera to capture (as it were) for all time some of those historic incidents. Crawfie opening her purse to put away a sixpence I had given her for change of half a crown! Crawfie holding a bag of flour in her own two tiny hands! Old Mr. Simmonds handing her a pound of cheese—or again, on another occasion, handing her *half* a pound of cheese! Old Mr. Simmonds' doggie barking at Crawfie! (Not that there was really much actual *danger*, for Spot would not have hurt so much as a fly if he could have helped it, I hasten to add.) Crawfie opening the door of the shop by turning the handle! Oh, so many treasured moments . . .

## LITTLE DID I THINK

Little did I think, that first October morning when Crawfie walked in and asked in clear, childish tones for a tin of syrup, that she would one day grow up to be a regular contributor to *Woman's Own*. I say little did I think—but I must confess I *did* think a *little*.

Just for an instant I had what the poet has called in a timeless phrase an intimation of mortality, and I said to myself, 'One day her name will be on all lips.'

Oh, she was cut out for something all right—you could tell. But—that she was to be chosen by Providence to make Royalty *living things* in the minds of all true Britons—that you could *not* tell. Let me try to describe her for you, as she was then. Let me try, at least, to persuade you that she was, after all, even at that early age, *not* so very very different (outwardly, at all events) from the little girl who lives next door.

She had, to begin with, only one head. Then, again, I remember she used to wear a glove on her left hand and another (matching) on her right hand—except in the warm weather, when I used to notice that she often wore no gloves at all. I put this down to the fact that she, like many ordinary little girls—I'm sure you know several yourself—felt warmer in the warm weather than in the cold weather, and (probably) *vice versa*, as the saying goes.

## WHEN SHE TOOK A BATH

Her shoes used to fasten at the front, and when she spoke, her lips would move—coming together when she wished to make a 'B' sound, and forming (roughly) a circle for 'O' sounds. Her mouth was the only thing she could speak with, although she could also make what I can only describe as *gestures* with her hands, with or without gloves. She was noticeably clean-shaven, and when she walked quickly she seemed to get from one place to another in less time than when she walked slowly.

On a certain date each year she used to become twelve months older, and she had a marked inability to be in more than one place at a time. (We always used to say she would grow out of that, and no doubt she has.)

I never saw her smoking a pipe, even at that early age, and she used to wear clothes, which she would invariably remove (as I heard from a close friend of the family) when she took a bath. Sometimes she would eat a toffee, and I was struck by the habit she had (almost, I used to think with pride, like my own little brother Harry) of carefully removing the wrap-



ping before popping the sweetmeat into her mouth. When her milk-teeth came out, incidentally, other teeth grew in their place, and you may be sure she found them very useful, particularly at mealtimes, when she used to eat food.

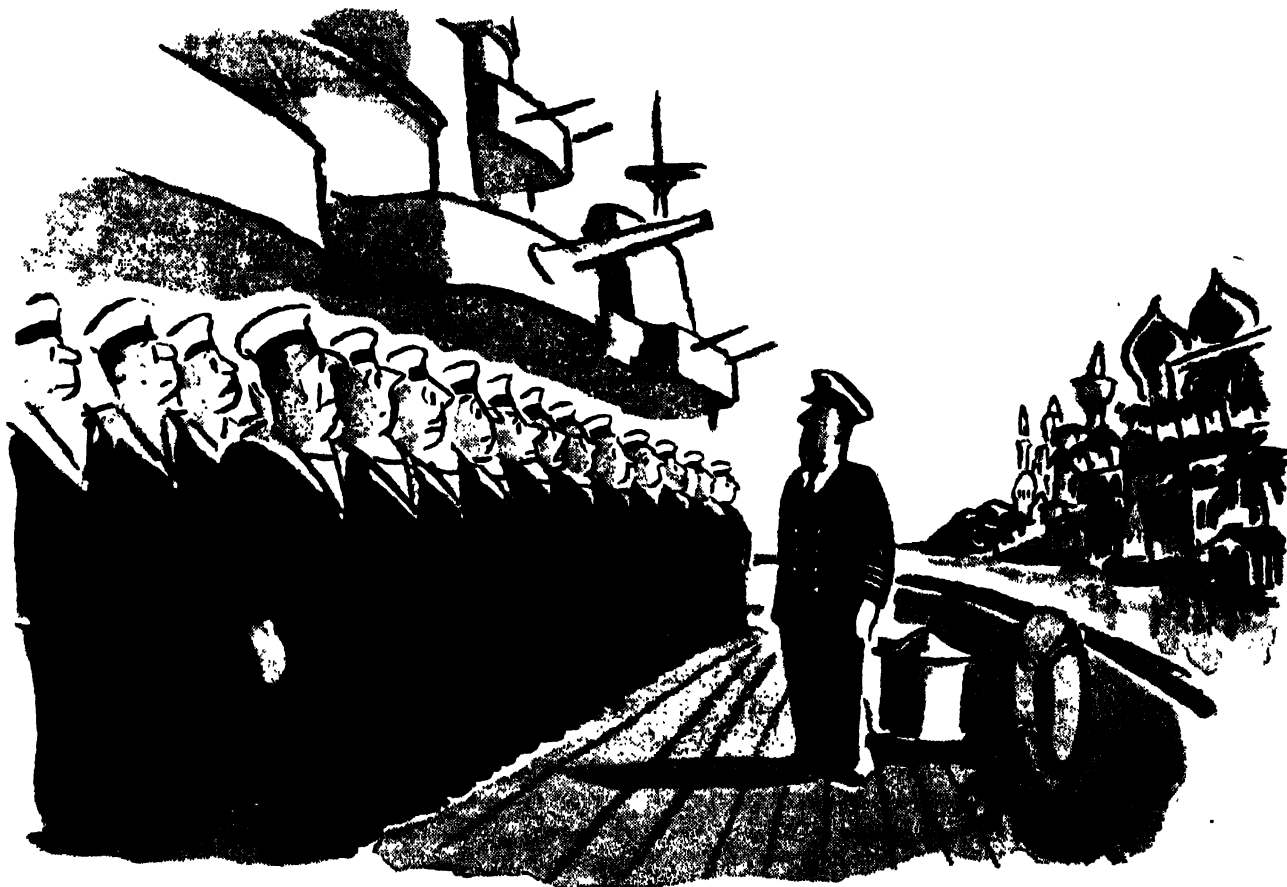
#### NOT TOO FANCIFUL

Sometimes, I regret to say, she was rather naughty, for she had quite a will of her own, and I have heard it said that once, in a 'tantrum,' she threw her teddy-bear right down on to the floor! I remember, too, that whenever she closed her eyes very tight, she was

able to see nothing at all—a faculty which I believe has remained with her to this very day.

I do hope I have *not* given you the impression that the youthful Crawfie was in any essential way really *different* from the majority of her school-fellows. In fact, in many ways she was *like* them, or at any rate *similar*, if not entirely the *same*. But it is not too fanciful to assume (is it?) that even at that early age there was stirring within her a realization that one day she was to create a new and unique profession for herself, and make quite a go of it. At any rate, I like to think so—don't you?

ALEX ATKINSON



*'We're here on what is known as a "goodwill visit." I'm afraid shore leave for you men will be out of the question.'*

# The Choir Boy

He waited by the vestry door  
And kicked a smaller chum.  
He came across the graveyard grass  
And as I watched him come,  
He blew and burst a big balloon  
Of coloured bubble gum.

Him seemed he scarce had worn a day  
One of those surplices.  
The reverence was not yet quite gone  
From that straight look of his:  
Albeit he looked the kind of boy  
That every choir boy is.

He had a soft, cherubic charm,  
An awkward urchin grace.  
His round blue eyes protruded from  
A pink and placid face.  
Yet when he spoke, his voice emerged  
A full and sounding bass.

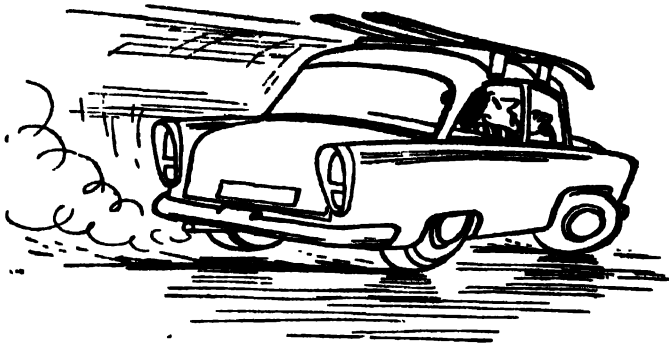
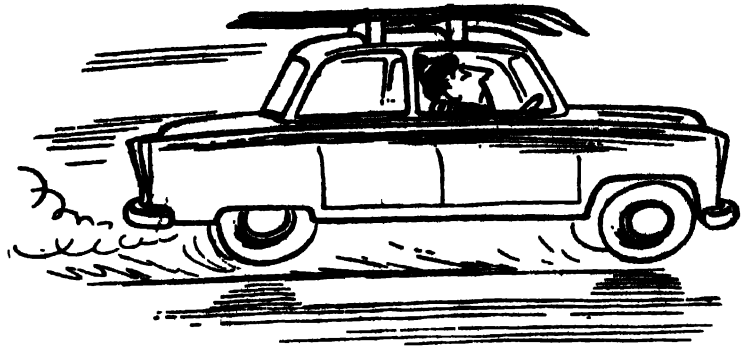
He said 'A treble rising twelve  
Is very seldom seen.  
Our working life is short compared  
With what it must have been  
When voices cracked so late,' he said.  
'We do it at thirteen.

'We crack so fast,' he said, 'they find  
It hard to fill the gaps.  
It is the Welfare State,' he said.  
'Or National Health perhaps.  
At any rate, it's just the same  
With all the other chaps.

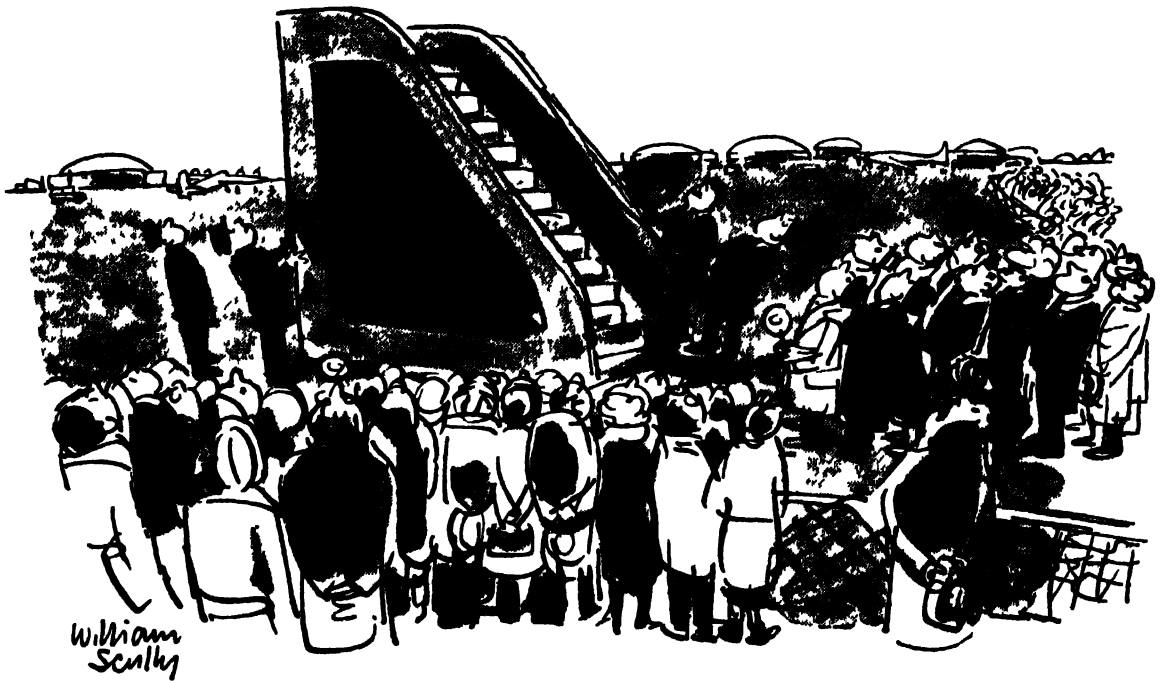
'They'll have to get more girls,' he said:  
And as he spoke I caught  
A sort of gleam upon his face  
Which seemed to come unsought  
And went before I could divine  
The nature of his thought.

P. M. HUBBARD





- Frostbank



# Air of Comfort

THE unadventurous slogan of British Overseas Airways—*B.O.A.C. Takes Good Care of You*—always seemed to me more appropriate for the National Health Service. Chiselled over hospital doors, it would be more encouraging for incoming patients than the usual bleak information that they now came under the dominion of No. — Management Committee or the Hippocratic reminder that The Art is Long but Life is Short.

The wording of the slogan is possibly intentional, for there is a close similarity between going into an aeroplane and going into hospital. In both you are immediately immobilized, attended by efficiently trained women who turn out not nearly so pretty as you had hoped, have your food and drink put into your lap, and are left with nothing to do for hours at a time except read magazines and go to sleep. You also enter the plane and the ward with the same subconscious uneasiness that you might never get out of either alive.

Aeroplanes and hospitals share one bad habit that the subjected occupants of both would be better without: *they will not leave you alone*. In the early days of flying the passenger was lashed in his cockpit, told to hang on, and left in peace until he was pulled out on arrival. But observe the modern passenger. Once the plane is airborne he keeps his eye on the little sign outside the pilot's cabin, and as soon as allowed eagerly lights a cigarette and unbuckles his safety belt like a pair of tight dress trousers at the beginning of the speeches. As he twists his neck to look out of the window the plane disappears into a cloud, which he inspects for ten minutes or so until forced to the opinion that once you have seen the inside of one cloud you have seen them all. Instead, he carefully studies the map of the route, pointing out to himself all the places he has been to on holiday or where his relatives live, inspects the pair of waxed paper bags, reads the name CAPTAIN A. R. Q. MACGONNEGAL on the pilot's door several times, discovers that his lifebelt really is underneath his seat, fiddles with the knob that makes him tip backwards and forwards, and finally folds his hands across his stomach and drops asleep.

This is the moment for the stewardess to lean over him and ask, with the expression of a nurse approach-

ing a timid inmate of the children's ward, if he'd like to give up his coat. Too modest to refuse, the passenger stands and removes it, upsetting everyone in the surrounding seats. He apologizes wildly all round, making lavish bows and expressive signs to the foreigners, sits down, and prepares to sleep again. The stewardess returns and asks in the same tone if he'd care for anything to read? He says, why, that's terribly kind of her, and he'd like the morning paper if he could. Ah, but how unfortunate! All she has left is the *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Bertingske Tidende*, and *Nya Pressen*. Perhaps he speaks Swedish, Danish, or Finnish? What a pity! Would he like something to drink instead? Just some coffee? In one second! The passenger stares at the cloud again for half an hour, wondering what happens if the propeller flies off, then the stewardess reappears with the largest and most vicious Martini he has ever tasted.

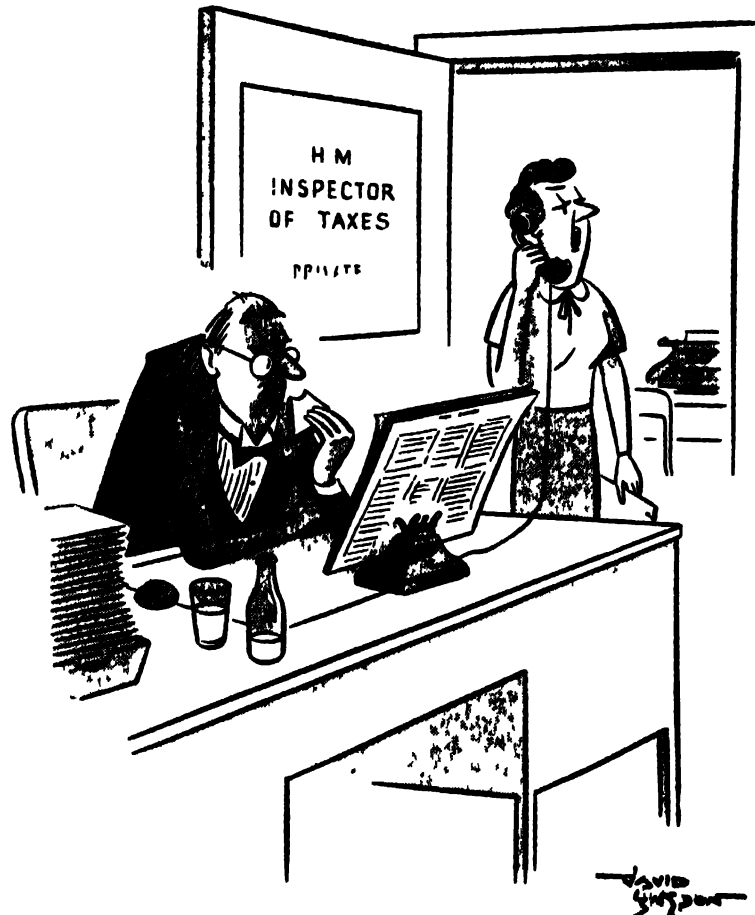
Once again our passenger folds his hands, closes his eyes, and allows his breathing to subside into gentle regularity. The man in front waves under his nose a piece of paper saying how high and how fast the plane is flying. The passenger gratefully studies this until he notices the directions in four languages urging him to pass it on without delay, which paralyses his mind in the middle of its acrobatics trying to convert kilometres and metres into more meaningful measurements. The stewardess takes his order for a cocktail before lunch, and returns almost at once with a large cup of coffee. In an aircraft, lunch is always eaten like a Victorian Sunday tea party, with everyone balancing cups and plates on their knees and trying at the same time to feel for the paper napkins under their feet. As his tray is removed, the passenger feels confident that sleep will be allowed at last. But he is shaken within a minute of shutting his eyes by the stewardess demanding 'Are you Mr. Omphosos?' and then by Captain A. R. Q. Macgonnegal in person asking cheerfully if he's all right as they're landing in twenty minutes. The passenger is now allowed to doze quietly until the stewardess returns to fasten his safety belt and give him a green tweed overcoat with a beret stuck in the pocket.

Air travel becomes even more dangerous for the passenger forced through bad weather, an outlandish route, or personal idiosyncrasy to take a succession of planes of different nationalities. A colleague of mine, a mild ophthalmic surgeon, was flying from Paris to Helsinki and pausing in London to collect a case of instruments. Believing that a full

stomach was a prophylactic against air-sickness, he boarded the French plane with a couple of *assiettes Anglaises* already under his belt, and was dismayed to find *Pâté d'Alouettes en Coussin* and *Coq au Vin Blanc* served as soon as they were airborne. He arrived at London with a feeling of well-being, and taking off in a Scandinavian plane shortly afterwards was pleased to see a small table clipped to his seat at five o'clock by one of the six-feet-tall blonde stewardesses. A cup of tea? he inquired. How considerate for the English passengers! Tea? But the gentleman was surely mistaken. In Sweden it was now dinner time. Finding that once you are caught

in the machinery of an airway's politeness it is impossible to escape, he submissively took his schnapps and smörgasbord. At Stockholm he managed to roll out of the plane and board the American aircraft taking him the rest of his journey, where he was given almost immediately half a pint of whisky and soda, and a tray containing clam chowder, crab Louie, chicken Maryland, and strawberry shortcake, with enough coffee for a family breakfast. Now he travels by sea, complains on leaving harbour he is seasick, and is left in sympathetic solitude with a pot of weak tea and a pile of water biscuits.

RICHARD GORDON



'I'm afraid the inspector can't discuss your expenses accounts now, sir. He's at lunch: glass of milk, sandwich and bun, total 1s. 4½d.'

# Experiment in Compression

*From 'A Pocket Pickwick' by W. Somerset*

IT WAS shortly after supper that I found myself sitting beside Winkle. No doubt I was drawn to him by the fact that, unlike most of the other members of the party, he was comparatively sober. I had just yielded to the drunken persistence of my host, Wardle, and accepted my fifth glass of wassail, and I remember wondering, as I replied without much enthusiasm to his maudlin ramblings, how I could manage to dispose of it unnoticed.

'Everyone sits down with us on Christmas Eve,' said Wardle thickly, 'just as you see them now, servants and all, and here we wait until the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and beguile the time with storfeits and old fories.'

'It's a good plan.'

'A happy Christmas! God bless us every one!'

'Yes.'

'Fill up, man! It will be two hours, good, before you see the bottom of the bowl through the deep, rich colour of the wassail.'

'I shouldn't have thought it would be so long.'

'A Christmas song! I'll give you one, in default of a better!'

'All right.'

At this point Pickwick lurched forward and attempted to slap Wardle on the back, missed his aim, and came within an ace of falling into the fire. I took advantage of the momentary confusion to withdraw myself a little from the centre of the festivities, and, as I have said, it was beside Winkle that I sat down a moment later. His first words startled me by their intensity.

'I can't stand it,' he said. 'I can't stand it.'

'It's only once a year.'

'Not with Pickwick, Tupman and Snodgrass. They're always at it. Those awful coach journeys! Brandy, rum, strong ale—it's a nightmare, I tell you! They turn nasty if you refuse. Mind you, I don't swallow a quarter of what I'm offered—not now. I've had a sort of rubber bulb made, and I keep it under my waistcoat. Pitiful, isn't it? They're in a stupor half the time, and it's quite possible, by a little sleight of hand——'

'Will this thing hold half a pint of wassail?'

'I'm sorry, it's full of punch and Madeira. Give it to Weller, quietly. He's been a good friend to me in that way more than once.'

'If you don't like these fellows, why go about with them?'

'I have to. They've got a sort of hold over me. They know something no one else must know. But I'm beginning to get desperate. It's not so much the drinking and the awful, never-ending heartiness—it's the mad things they do. They simply can't turn round without getting into some revolting imbroglio. Take Pickwick. He's been arrested, he's been sued for breach of promise, he's had a fight with a cabman, he's been thrown out of some unfortunate woman's bedroom in Ipswich. He doesn't mind. He takes things like that in his stride. To me they're agony. How would you like to be chased round Bath in your dressing-gown by a madman with a carving-knife?'

'Not much.'

'Mind you, I got no sympathy from Pickwick. He actually seemed to think I'd disgraced them all in some way. But when he's found hiding in a girls' school at midnight, that's nothing—just boyish high spirits. He'd better look out, though, or I'll be doing something I shall regret. I came pretty close to it only the other day.'

'How was that?'

'Wardle and I were shooting. I was just raising my gun to my shoulder when I happened to catch sight of Pickwick, beaming away in that sickeningly benevolent way of his. Suddenly something seemed to snap in my head, and before I knew where I was I'd aimed at him and pulled the trigger.'

'What happened?'

'I hit Tupman.'

I was silent. After all, it was no affair of mine. Wardle was now hiccoughing up some garbled tale about a man named Grub, and Pickwick was listening with an air of drunken profundity. It seemed an opportune moment to slip away unnoticed.



It was well before noon when I left Dingley Dell on the following day, yet already Wardle was glassy-eyed and lachrymose. I thought that he would have shaken my hand for ever.

'Breakings-up are capital things in our schooldays, but in after life they are painful enough.'

'Yes.'

'Death, self-interest, and fortune's changes are every day breaking up many a happy group and wattering them scar and fide.'

'I suppose so.'

'You'll split half a dozen of port before you go?'

'No, thanks.'

I got away at last, after shaking a dozen hands and having my back slapped with such violence that I had some difficulty in maintaining my footing. I consoled myself with the reflection that in all probability I should never again set eyes upon Pickwick or any of the whole bibulous crew. But I was mistaken.

T. S. WATT



# Marlene Jones

'Bless you!' Miss Jones says as she ends a telephone conversation or leaves an acquaintance; or 'Bye, now; be good!' The voice is cheerful, the nearly fashionable catchwords are used without self-consciousness, but to a sensitive ear the vowel-sounds have overtones which suggest that her present manner of speaking has been fairly recently acquired. Although he will not recognize the name, a person meeting Miss Jones for the first time might wonder whether she were an actress.

This guess is given further probability by her appearance and her conversation. Her clothes, though not particularly modish, are smart enough and worn with an air; and her rather extensive make-up is applied with professional skill, and makes the most of agreeable, if slightly vapid, features and colouring. Her conversation is larded with the first-names or nicknames of people eminent in the world of stage, screen or radio, and with anecdotes which suggest a considerable degree of familiarity. It is probably only members of the professions who will notice that there is rather more emphasis on producers, directors and similar functionaries than on performers.

Miss Jones is not an actress, though she makes her living in the world of entertainment. She is employed in a much more recent, and incidentally a much more secure, profession; she is one of the specialists who ensure the relatively smooth and efficient functioning of the technically complicated media of mass entertainment by cinema and television.

Miss Jones's successful career is a triumph of perseverance and adaptability; both financially and socially she has risen far above her very humble origins. Her Mum had been passionately devoted to the 'flicks' and gave her daughter her rather unfortunate first name of Marlene in honour of one of her favourite stars, though she hesitated some time between that and Greta, Lilian or Mae. Miss Jones dislikes the name herself—the witticisms which it evokes have lost all their humour for her, and it tends to reveal her age—and she asks her intimate friends to call her Mary; but it would upset Mum if her credits were ascribed to 'Mary Jones,' and so she keeps to her baptismal name professionally.

When motherhood prevented Mrs. Jones visiting

the local picture house with her previous regularity she filled the void in her life by assiduous perusal of all the 'picture' magazines, usually to the background of nice music from the wireless. Little Marlene almost literally learned to read from such sources, picking out 'The star is in the car' instead of 'The cat is on the mat.' As soon as she was old enough to read the sub-titles she and Mum went to at least two film matinées a week.



Even to Mrs. Jones's fond eye Marlene at fourteen had neither the face, the voice (the talkies had come in by then) nor the figure for a future star; to prevent her daughter having to descend to a shop assistant or factory worker Mrs. Jones broke the vow she had made to herself at marriage, that she would never go out to work again, and charred for two years to pay for Marlene's tuition at a secretarial school; and, when Marlene had got her diploma, scrutinized every possible vacancy until she had secured her a job within the sacred precincts of a Studio. The evening that Marlene was able to report in the minutest detail how naturally a famous performer had acted in the office Mrs. Jones considered that all her sacrifices were amply repaid.

Marlene Jones's progress in the technical side of the entertainment world was not spectacular but

was very steady; her willingness, her industry and her considerable capabilities were slowly recognized, and each year saw her in a position of greater responsibility and better pay. The war made little interruption of her career; although she was put into uniform, she was employed in the same sort of jobs, either with documentary film units or with Ensa activities.

Her wartime experiences did however greatly modify her personality. For the first time in her life she was away from Mum for long periods; she adapted her accent, her vocabulary, her tastes in food and drink to those of her more distinguished companions (for in the small wartime units she was much closer to the stars and directors than she had ever been in the mammoth peace-time organizations); by the time she was demobilized she was a pretty typical representative of the world her mother had worshipped from afar.

To-day she shares a small flat with a colleague in a

conveniently central location. She lived at home for a little while after the war, but the very irregular hours she was forced to keep disturbed Dad's rest; and for the sake of her career she needed somewhere where she could return hospitality. She is assiduous however in visiting Mum whenever possible and retailing every item of studio gossip; and whenever, as quite frequently happens, a young man shows signs of being seriously interested in her (in an honourable way; her strict sexual morality is one of the few aspects of her personality she has not modified) she always takes him to see Mum and Dad. Somehow nothing ever comes of these potential engagements; for though Miss Jones has no embarrassment about her origins and is nothing of a snob, the same cannot be said of the young gentlemen who feel themselves somewhat attracted by her. She is still young, but no longer very young; it seems likely that her name will always be Marlene Jones.

GEOFFREY GORER



*'Shall we settle for ninepence, sir?'*



## Friends of the Cathedral

At the end of our Cathedral  
Where people buy and sell  
It says 'Friends of the Cathedral'  
And I'm sure they wish it well.

Perhaps they gave the bookstall  
Of modernistic oak  
And the chairs for the assistants  
And the ash-trays for a smoke.

Is it they who range the marigolds  
In pots of art design  
About 'The Children's Corner',  
That very sacred shrine?

And do they hang the notices  
Off old crusaders' toes?  
And paint the cheeks of effigies  
That curious shade of rose?

Those things that look like wireless sets  
Suspended from each column  
Which bellow out the Litany  
Parsonically solemn—

Are they a present from the Friends?  
And if they are, how nice  
That aided by their echo  
One can hear the service twice.

The hundred little bits of script  
Each framed in *passee-partout*  
And nailed below the monuments,  
A clerical 'Who's Who'—

Are they as well the work of Friends?  
And do they also choose  
The chantry chapel curtains  
In dainty tea-shop blues?

The Friends of the Cathedral—  
Are they friendly with the Dean?  
And if they do things on their own  
What does their friendship mean?

JOHN BETJEMAN

# The Way Forward

MACQUEEN is a dear, good fellow, and has a mind powerful and sinewy with logical thinking, and it is my opinion that this idea of his will either be a big thing for the human race, or it will get him into prison.

It would have been possible for him to have picked up this idea or notion from literary and historical sources only. Potential literary source: *The Government Inspector*, fictional tale by Russian literary man Gogol. Potential historical source: well-known hoax, afterwards the subject of several theatrical pieces, carried out by the German ex-convict subsequently dubbed the Captain of Köpenick, who, for his private ends, played ju-jitsu with the bureaucrats of Prussia, and threw them head over heels by the sole weight of their own weaknesses, beliefs, and ambitions.

MacQueen's idea was, however, born of an incident occurring in real life. Specific case in point: that of James O'Gougane, operating in some district of the Irish Republic.

Narrator's Note: This thing is understood to have approximately happened once in Ireland, but if anyone imagines the whole *mise en scène* is insusceptible of being transferred at the drop of a hat to Italy, heart of the Don Camillo country, with Bergman and bikes, that is where he makes a notable error. Or Mexico, if that's what the man wants.

The court proceedings show that when O'Gougane got out of gaol for whatever it was he had got in for, what he had to his name was a darkish, decent-looking suit of clothes and three pounds and five shillings. And the first thing he did was buy a stiffish felt hat, black. Also purchased by the man O'Gougane were a second-hand steel measuring tape that shoots out of a little round box on a spring, and a child's toy telescope.

Then he went a good distance off and made inquiries in this village or small market town he was in, and hired a car with a man to drive it. And they came to where there was running beside the road a long, low, stone wall bordering a great, green estate, with the white front of the Big House gleaming through the mighty trees like a hundred-pound note.

Owner of house and estate: Mrs. Holme-Wade. Whether married or, etc.: Widow of prominent English manufacturer. General description and status:

Refugee from the Welfare State. Personal hobbies, tastes, disposition and attitude: Anti.

As was her custom, Mrs. Holme-Wade was gazing from the window of the morning-room, on the lookout for unwelcome events, being prepared. She saw this stiff, felt, black hat bobbing along by the wall, stopping and going and stopping and going, and then she saw the man under the hat climbing carefully and slowly and without attempted concealment over the wall. And what he did when he got over the wall was look through a telescope, and nod, and make a note in a pocket book.

Then he took a thing out of his pocket and seemed to be measuring distances, pacing out a section of the green sward, and measuring, and pacing again.

Servitor summoned. 'Find out what that man imagines he's doing.' Servitor on return states: 'He is from the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in Dublin, prospecting for the new telegraph and telephone lines they are going to put up.' 'Ask him to come and speak to me immediately.'

It was a very lovely meeting. Mrs. Holme-Wade read the newspapers and was familiar with the character and aims of Governments, bureaucrats, and persons of that, as Mr. Holme-Wade used to say, kidney. She knew that they ride roughshod over tradition, infringe rights of individuals, are cunning, devilish cunning, incompetent and corrupt. That was her attitude, and O'Gougane knew it must be. That was what made the meeting lovely from his point of view. By his own attitude he confirmed her opinion at every point. That was what made it lovely from her point of view.

She even converted him. He said it was a crying shame, a wonderful estate like that to be ruined and made unsightly with telegraph poles and miles and miles and miles of unsightly wire. They should really keep the line along the road. But what was to be done? Orders, red tape, duty. Quite, but one had heard that in certain cases, ways and means, approach—er—don't misunderstand me, but er—er—

Judging the weight and momentum of poor Mrs. Holme-Wade's beliefs to a nicety, ju-jitsuist O'Gougane ruefully admitted that, deplorable as it might seem to honest people, there were, nevertheless, if one wanted to get things done, well I'm afraid



*'You keep these up—we're not at St. Tropez now, you know.'*

that's human nature. In short, he threw her for a cash payment of £350 which he said he would require to distribute in bribes so as to keep the line to the public road, prevent the horribly impending disfigurement of the Holme-Wade estate, keep things smoothshod and uninfripping.

Attitude of Mrs. Holme-Wade at this point: One of gladness. She had saved the estate from disfigurement. And, far more important than that, she had been proved entirely right in her estimate of the way things are.

Attitude of O'Gougane at this point: One of gladness conducive to further effort. And what he did was, he went a good distance off and with a little piece of the £350 he bought from a timber merchant a small number of sound, good-looking poles of the type used for telegraph and telephone lines in very rural districts. In a lorry hired in another place he had these poles collected and brought back to the

village or small market town he had started from, where he was already well known as the man from the Postal Department that was prospecting for the new line, out by Mrs. Holme-Wade's place and all over.

He used to sit in the bar of the hotel, and the landlord and the barman and all the farmers of the district who came to the hotel used, at the sight of him, to be reminded of Government and of bureaucrats: how blood-sucking and incompetently spendthrift they are, throwing away the tax-payers' money, and themselves men that couldn't run a fifty-acre farm if you gave it them. They argued sometimes with O'Gougane about it, and at first he said 'We mustn't exaggerate,' and then one day, suddenly, with oaths and groans he was converted, and he raved and shouted that there was nothing anybody could tell him about the incompetence of some of these people back in the Department that he wouldn't double.

There was only one farmer in the bar at the time and he asked what was the matter? Matter? The matter was that those bird-brains back in the Department after they had ordered several thousand poles—the very best timber, oh, of course, naturally—for the new line, now had decided the line was going to be uneconomic or some gobbledygook, and what do they want now but will O'Gougane take immediate steps to sell off those poles at public auction for what they will fetch. What sort of poles? The same as that first little consignment that came in the lorry.

So the farmer's attitude was one of great gladness, because he had been proved right in everything he ever said about Government, and also because if he could bribe O'Gougane to sell him, say, 500 poles of that fine timber at a very, very low price before it got to auction he would make a packet one way and

another. Among this farmer's beliefs was a belief that once in a while you meet one of these bureaucrats that is smart enough to know which side his bread is buttered. Just between ourselves, confidentially.

Just between themselves, confidentially, O'Gougane threw him for a £25 bribe, plus a sizeable deposit payment on the timber, and in the course of the day he was converted in the presence of eight other successive farmers, on similar terms. It was a day of joyfulness in that farming community, for they had made money and, even better than that, they had swindled the Government. O'Gougane bade them good-bye, and behind his back they said, 'They're all alike, those fellows.'

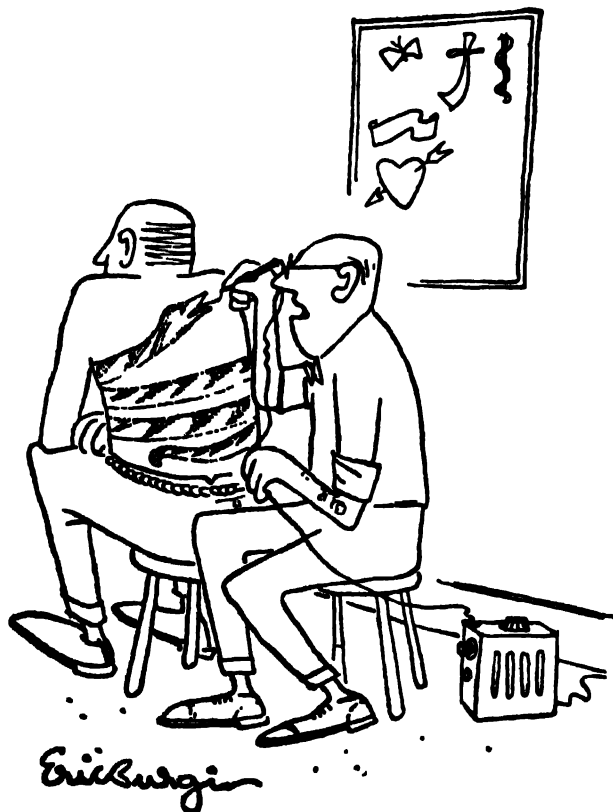
'But in the end,' I pointed out to MacQueen, 'O'Gougane was gaol'd. Of course, he'd had the spending of all that money first.'

'That's not the point at all,' MacQueen said. 'Money, gaol—the point is who got the prestige out of it? And who got humiliated and laughed to scorn? Aren't we sitting here at this minute admiring the greatness of the ingenuity of O'Gougane, wriggling, too, with delicious contempt of the folly of that woman and those farmers? Like the town councillors in that Russian literary story, and the ones that got hoaxed at Köpenick—derided and mocked from generation to generation.'

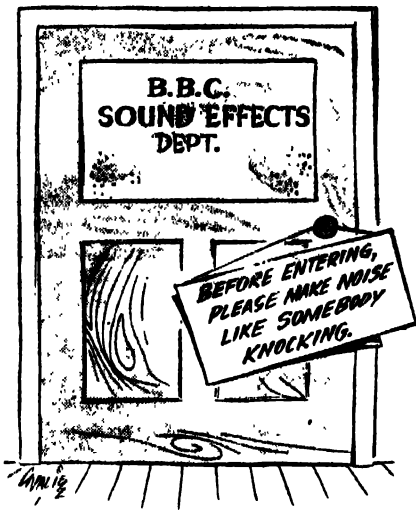
'And how do we know,' shouted MacQueen, 'that we aren't at any day or hour laying ourselves open to that same fate, victims of the future ridicule of millions? How do we know that this or that joker with his tax form isn't out on the Köpenick? What we need to do is to protect ourselves in advance against these hoaxers. Don't say to yourselves, my friends, that's a tax collector or a ticket collector or a man from the insurance company or a member of the Cabinet; say to yourselves he's probably an O'Gougane seeking to exploit my native prejudices and secret hopes for his private ends, and treat him as such.'

The man behind the bar said 'Long past time, gentlemen, please.' And MacQueen said 'Shut that row, you mere impostor. You can't fool me.' And the man behind the bar sent for the police, and the last thing I heard MacQueen say before the real row started was 'Listen, you tricky runt, the only thing I want to hear from you is where did you pinch that uniform?'

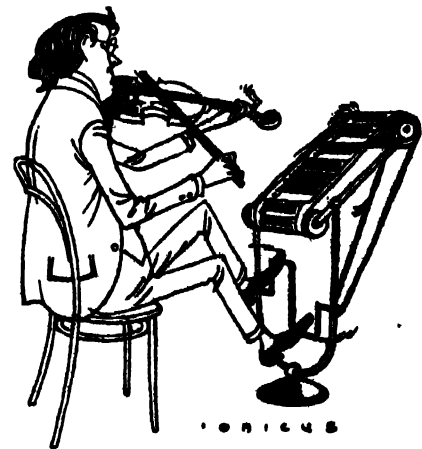
CLAUD COCKBURN

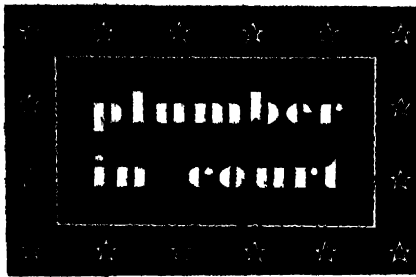


'Not too tight, is it?'



*'I still say if I arrived after lunch I'm entitled to lunch today.'*





**Edgar Lustgarten.**

**A**RE you acquainted with a man named Arthur Leafe?

'Leafe?' said Gryme. 'Leafe?'

You could tell, in that moment, just how puzzled he was. And did ever a case against any plumber look as black? Was ever a rope being more slowly and surely woven that would more inevitably lie round any neck? We may never know.

'Leafe,' repeated Marshal Birkings, with what might have passed for a wink in the direction of the jury. 'Arthur Leafe. With an E.'

Note the subtlety here. Mark it well; for in it lies the key to the whole tense drama of that morning, the seventeenth day of the trial. 'Are you acquainted with a man...' Marshal Birkings does not say 'Do you *know* Arthur Leafe?' He does not say 'Did you know Arthur Leafe?' He does not even say, as well he might, 'Have you *heard* of Arthur Leafe?' No. Implacably, without fuss, with that barely perceptible hitch to his sock which helped to make Marshal Birkings so striking a figure in and out of the Old Bailey, 'Are you *acquainted* with a man named Arthur Leafe?' he says.

'Well, no,' says Gryme.

### **He licks his lips**

**I**T was the beginning, this—the beginning of a fugue that was to go on all that fateful morning, while the fashionable spectators silently applauded every nuance, every twist and turn of the counterpoint.

'You are not acquainted with him?'

'No.'

'You have never met him?'

'No.'

'If he were to stand before you now you would not recognize him?'

'N-no.'

● When a wielder of the blowlamp is caught up in the hot-water system of real life... the spot-light moves from bathroom to court-room... the glamour of chromium taps clashes with harsh facts. To-day the Evening Standard introduces a new series telling the stories of some of the plumbers who have encountered a difficult joint... in the witness-box.

The note had been struck at once. The main theme of this elaborate sonata had been stated—without fuss, without histrionics. Gryme did not know Arthur Leafe.

Now, this is the first mention of Arthur Leafe that anyone has heard from the beginning of the trial. It is probable that nobody, nobody in that whole hushed court, has been aware of his existence before this moment. Bear that point in mind. For, make no mistake, here is the crux, the fulcrum, the turning-point, of

### **In the shadow**

**I**T was short; barely a foretaste of the thunder that was to come. And yet, in that brief, simple-seeming passage of question and answer, something changed. The atmosphere became tense.

Picture the scene. Gryme, the tall, svelte, furtive plumber, apprehensive in the box. Marshal Birkings, calm, assured, standing with the weight of his body on his left foot, arms folded, eyes closed. 'It seemed,' wrote a reporter on that fateful

## ***Who pushed Charles Gryme's Handcart?***

Marshal Birkings' argument. This is the flood-gate which, once opened to its fullest extent (and opened it is to be, before many hours have elapsed), will bring the whole pitiful edifice of the defence crashing down, to be borne away upon the tide of Birkings' closing speech.

The first lightning strokes were swiftly added to.

'When you opened the door of Number Eleven Pool Street, was there not a man standing in the shadow near the pillar-box?'

'No,' says Gryme. But he is not sure. His eyes move warily in his head. He is not sure. He licks his lips. With his tongue.

'Are you *sure*?' Marshal Birkings raises his voice slightly on the last word. The first two words—the 'are' and the 'you'—are spoken almost casually, with no emphasis at all to speak of. But the third word—the 'sure'—has a sharp, icy edge to it that is felt at the back of the court.

'Yes,' says Gryme.

'I see,' says Marshal Birkings. And his fingers lightly toy with the half-smoked cigar in his waistcoat pocket. The first crisis has passed.

morning, 'that every eye in the court was fixed on the master of cross-examination.'

And what a master! For see where we have got so far. *Gryme doesn't know Arthur Leafe.* He is not sure whether there was a man standing in the shadow by the pillar-box. That is all. Just two, irrefutable facts, wormed out of the accused by Marshal Birkings. But see what he makes of them! If ever a plumber was hanged by sheer, brilliant cross-examination, that plumber was Charles Edmund Havelock Gryme.

Birkings starts quietly. Few people in the crowded court can have heard his next question—the question that leads from the grim introduction to the dramatic climax of this first movement.

### **Hesitation**

**'W**OULD you be surprised to hear that the man in the shadow was Arthur Leafe?'

Gryme hesitates. To say no would be a denial. To say yes...

'I—don't know,' Gryme says at last. Very slowly Marshal Birkings opens his eyes.



'Let me put it this way. Would you be surprised to hear that the man in the shadow, whose name was Arthur Leafe, followed you into Number Eleven Fool Street and took eight flash-light photographs of you as you clubbed Agnes Le Roy with a pipe-wrench——'

'I must object!' Allendale Muskratt is on his feet at once. But it is of no avail. This time there is no stopping Marshal Birkings. He has the bit between his teeth now.

'As you clubbed Agnes Le Roy with a pipe-wrench,' he repeats, 'sawed her into two halves, wrapped her in a soiled bedspread—*this* soiled bedspread—and bundled her through the window into the waiting handcart?'

Now Gryme was no fool, with all his faults. He knew where this was leading. He had to be careful. One false step, and . . .

'Yes,' said Gryme, after a moment's hesitation.

Only a moment, but it was enough. Marshal Birkings was on him like a tiger. Pulling a packet of photographs from under his gown, he flung it, almost contemptuously, towards the witness-box.

### Wave of laughter

'REQUEST that these be handed to the prisoner!' he cried. And then he added, with one of those sardonic flashes of wit which so endeared him to bar and public alike, 'Perhaps he'd care to have a few of these enlarged.'

That did it. It was the signal, that. A wave of healthy laughter broke across the court from the public gallery. Even the judge could scarcely hide his smile. At this sudden relaxation of tension, one man alone, as he studied the pictures of

his crime, remained glum-faced. Whatever else may be said of Gryme, this much is certain: he had no sense of humour.

### Seeds of suspicion

It was not the end, of course. Nine days were to elapse before the trial had run its gruelling course. But in those few minutes of devastating thrust and parry, which have delighted connoisseurs of cross-examination ever since, there can be no doubt that Marshal Birkings sowed the first seeds of suspicion in the fertile minds of the twelve good men and true.

Was he guilty? That question may never be satisfactorily answered. This much alone is certain: he may have been.

And Marshal Birkings proved it.

ALEX ATKINSON



# Strange Interlude

HER dress was of black velvet and severely plain in the mediæval style, fitting close to the trunk, which was well packed and with a waist somewhere in the region of the pelvis. The tight sleeves tapered to a point over the back of the hand and the full-gathered skirt fell just short of the ankles. These, to my faint surprise, were hidden in white openwork stockings and the feet in good Cromwellian shoes with square buckles. This was evening dress, and, as evening dress calls for jewellery, a locket on a black ribbon was tied tight round the column of her throat and a string of chunky amber beads like the teeth of a chain-smoking dinosaur hung down below her midriff. Amber, too, was pendant from her lobes, which peeped out from under a pair of coiled and greying plaits. Her face reminded me of, among other things, a self-portrait by Hokusai, except that her small elongated eyes were behind pale horn-rimmed glasses.

'How do you do?' she said as we were introduced, with a grave articulation that made it sound as though she really wanted to know. I having asked the same of her, it began to look as though conversation had lagged beyond hope of recovery. But no such luck.

'You have tried the punch, I presume?' she said

presently, in the tones of one who would take no denial. I tried to laugh off the beaker of whiskey in my hand with some feeble theorizing about herbs and spices not being good for the old digestion.

She looked at me like a disapproving musk rat. A moment's thought would have told me there wasn't anything I could teach her about the properties of herbs and spices, or, I suspected, about gillyflower water, the making of rush mats, pomanders, or how to vamp an accompaniment on the bass viol.

And so the talk slid over to other things. We spoke of her habitat. It seemed she had her being, if you could call it that, in a small Buckinghamshire town, which on that account alone would no doubt prefer to be nameless. I knew, because it was a household word where words now obsolete and of Saxon origin are the common currency of speech, that she and her husband did very nicely thank you out of a craft factory, where they turned out textiles of plain but mediocre design and furniture of more than mediocre discomfort. I glanced at her capable hand, with its heavy cornelian ring, as she raised it to remove with charming unselfconsciousness a hair that had got into her mouth, and I imagined it, shuttle-clasped, moving with dexterous speed between warp and woof as her loom exuded some hideous fabric.

Now to her side came the diffident bulk of her mate, looking as uncomfortable as a plucked ostrich in his unaccustomed evening togs. A fellow who couldn't let ill alone, he had added to his troubles by wearing a black stock that pushed his hair up at the back into a fringe like Grock's wig. For what seemed longer no doubt than it was they looked at each other speechlessly in mutual satisfaction. Presently this period of silent adoration came to an end, and in a voice higher than the chandelier her spouse gave tongue.

'Well, my deahr?'

To which, in tones somewhat lower than his, she flashed the riposte:

'Well?'

Again silence fell between them and they stood smiling mutely at each other.

'You have tried the punch?' she said at last.





*'Certainly I'll have another—  
I can still hear.'*

Unable to block my ears in time, I caught his shrill response.

'I have indeed and I pronounce it capital.'

He grinned at me shyly with teeth that were rather too far apart. I noticed his hand had been surreptitiously exploring his pocket, and I guessed what for. He leant towards me and said *sotto voce*, with a look that appealed for my support and failed utterly:

'Do you suppose our hostess would permit a pipe?'

'I don't smoke, so I wouldn't know,' I said, lapsing through sheer nerves into the affectation of the con-

ditional. He peered about him with a look of wildly exaggerated consternation and then, in order, I suppose, to keep up the conspiratorial pretence, tip-toed away.

Once more the colourless almond eyes of my companion—how else to describe her?—watched me with unblinking expectancy. I felt I could not disappoint her. After all, she was, or appeared to be, a woman. It was unfortunate; my knowledge of how to make a rush mat had deserted me with startling suddenness as soon as I left my kindergarten. And

what did I know of the bass viol? I tried to rack my brains for the latest intelligence from the Dolmetsch front but they refused to be racked. Finally, for want of a better utterance, I found myself telling her that I had just come back from Wembley.

'Wembley,' she said. Her tone was that of the Blessed Damozel, a tone of sweet, incurious surprise.

'Trinder on ice,' I said, 'or rather, Aladdin.'

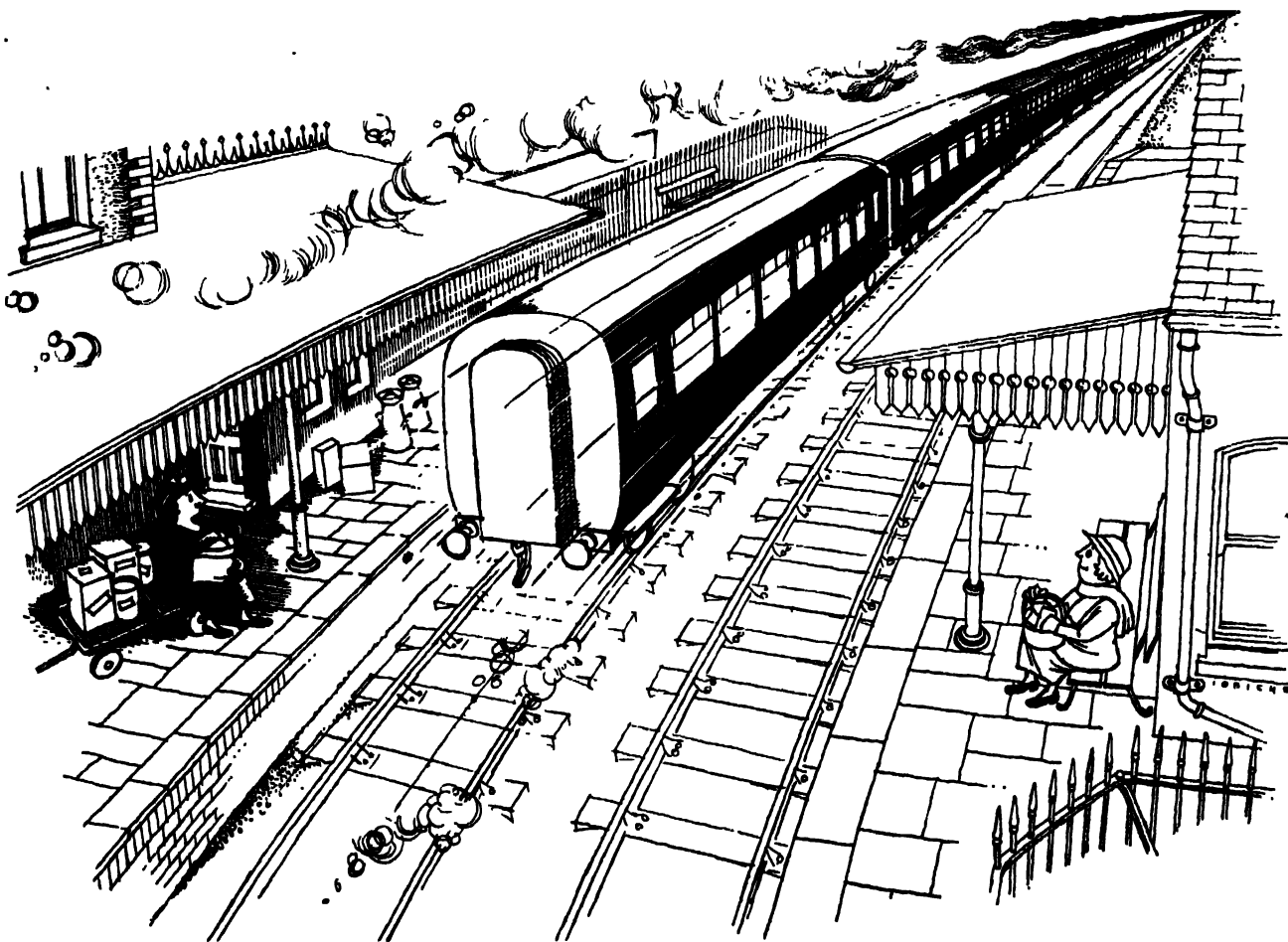
Through closed lips she made a sound like that of someone playing a one-stringed fiddle with an empty

bottle. As luck would have it, and a better stroke seldom came my way, her hero at this moment returned. His pipe was in his hand and I was sorry to see that his manner was that of one who has glad tidings to impart.

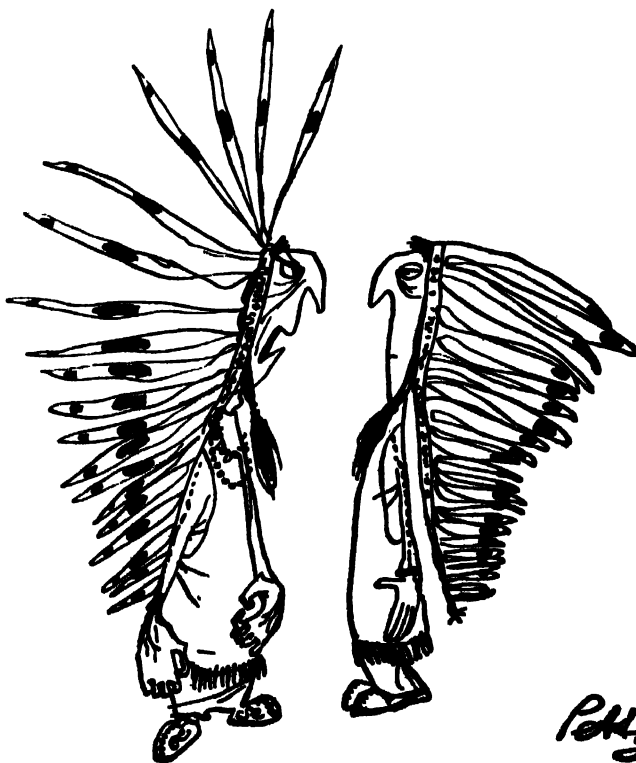
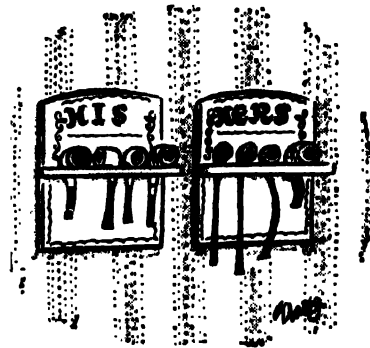
'Deahr,' said he, 'a surprise; Amanda has brought her lute and is going to sing.'

Whereunto answereth his ladye with tranquil mien yet merrily withal, 'O joy!'

NICOLAS BENTLEY



*'... as I was saying ...'*



'What do you mean, I "tend to be excitable"?'

Pelly

# Democracy's Choice

*Q.—On what principles does a democracy choose its leaders? Illustrate from British Prime Ministers of this century*

A. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a privileged caste chose the country's political leaders from its own numbers—such effete representatives as Chatham, Fox and Pitt. With the coming of democracy, however, the choice has been made from a wider field, and certain clearly discernible principles have been established. This may be seen from an examination of the reasons why the eleven British Prime Ministers of this century have been chosen.

*Lord Salisbury* (1900–1902) was chosen because he was a Cecil. It is a convention of our unwritten constitution that there shall always be a Cecil in the ante-room, even if not in the council chamber. As Gladstone said in his sleep, 'You cannot keep a good Cecil down.' 'Nor a bad one either,' whispered Disraeli to his Queen.

*A. J. Balfour* (1902–1905) was chosen because he was the nephew of Lord Salisbury. It is another valuable convention that Cecils shall look after their own. '*Per Hatfield ad Downing Street*' runs the family motto. This is best translated as 'For Probity and Bobbity.'

*Campbell-Bannerman* (1905–1908) was chosen because his party could agree on no one else. This has become a vital guiding rule in a democracy's choice of its leaders.

*H. H. Asquith* (1908–1910) was chosen because he was a Balliol man. He rode to power on the tide of Dr. Jowett's reputation, and constructed a Balliol Government which Oxford historians have praised as the most intelligent the country has ever known. Balliol has now been superseded by Winchester and New College, but there will not be true equality of opportunity until Cambridge men have a chance as well.

*H. H. Asquith* (1910–1910) was chosen because Margot Asquith did not yet have enough material for her autobiography.

*H. H. Asquith* (1910–1916) was chosen because he was the father of Lady Violet Bonham-Carter.

*Lloyd George* (1916–1918) was chosen by himself and the Press Lords, thus establishing the democratic

principle that no man shall be kept down because of the nature of his motives or of his support. This established true equality of opportunity for the first time in Britain.

*Lloyd George* (1918–1922) was chosen by himself, the Press Lords and those whom he had recommended for peerages and baronetcies, thus showing that a democratic Prime Minister must continually widen the basis of his support.

*Bonar Law* (1922–1923) was chosen because he had waited so long.

*Stanley Baldwin* (1923–1924) was chosen because no one could abide Lord Curzon, thus establishing the democratic principle that Prime Ministers shall be chosen from the elected House of Parliament. This principle is still apparently continued, but it would be wise to watch the Cecils.

*Ramsay MacDonald* (1924–1924) was chosen because not enough former Liberals and Conservatives had yet joined the Labour Party to deprive real Labour leaders of high office. This established a democratic principle, though only Lord Jowitt knows which.

*Stanley Baldwin* (1924–1929) was chosen because he smoked a pipe and liked Mary Webb, thus proving that a democracy has a proper appreciation of character and literature.

*Ramsay MacDonald* (1929–1931) was chosen because all the duchesses in London wanted to kiss him, thus proving that a democracy will not lightly abandon the aristocratic element in government. This is another reason for watching the Cecils.

*Ramsay MacDonald* (1931–1935) was chosen because Mr. Baldwin was willing that he should be, thus establishing the democratic principle that faction is not all and that men of goodwill will always come to the aid of their country.

*Stanley Baldwin* (1935–1937) was chosen because he had not yet sealed his lips.

*Neville Chamberlain* (1937–1940) was chosen because he was the son of Joseph Chamberlain; the half-brother of Austen Chamberlain; controlled the

Birmingham caucus; and knew about public health. He thus proved that men of talent may rise to the top in a democratic state.

*Winston S. Churchill* (1940-1945) was chosen because, in time of war, the British turned instinctively to the effete representative of a privileged caste. He was, of course, only a figure-head, and the real running of the war was left to such representatives of democracy as Sir John Wardlaw-Milne.

*Clement Attlee* (1945-1951) was chosen because his party could agree on no one else. See comments on *Campbell-Bannerman* above. Such men as he, once

chosen, remain in power by keeping their parties always on the verge of a split, thus proving that 'Divide and Rule' is true in a democracy as in any other form of Government.

*Clement Attlee* (1950-1951) was chosen because he had not yet appointed Mr. H. Morrison to the Foreign Office.

*Winston S. Churchill* (1951-1955) was chosen because Mr. H. Morrison had been appointed to the Foreign Office.

HENRY FAIRLIE



# The Waste Man

How pleasant to know Mr. Eliot,  
With his quizzical smile  
And his runcible-hat,  
How pleasant to know what he's driving at.

Between the appearance and the reality,  
Between the strophe and the antistrophe,  
Between the devil and the deep Bloo  
msbury cult of semi-detachment  
Falls the curtain,  
And we are left darkling  
In the Delphic shade,  
With our classical illusions,  
And the dubious benefits  
Of a secondary education.  
How shall we know  
When *The Times* does not know  
And the *Telegraph* is deaf

To the voice of the Prophet  
In the waste land of Belgravia,  
To the still, sad music of humanity  
In the wilderness of suburbia,  
Where lovely woman stoops to folly  
And a new Tiresias tells the melancholy  
Tale of man's fatuity  
And the pointlessness of it all?

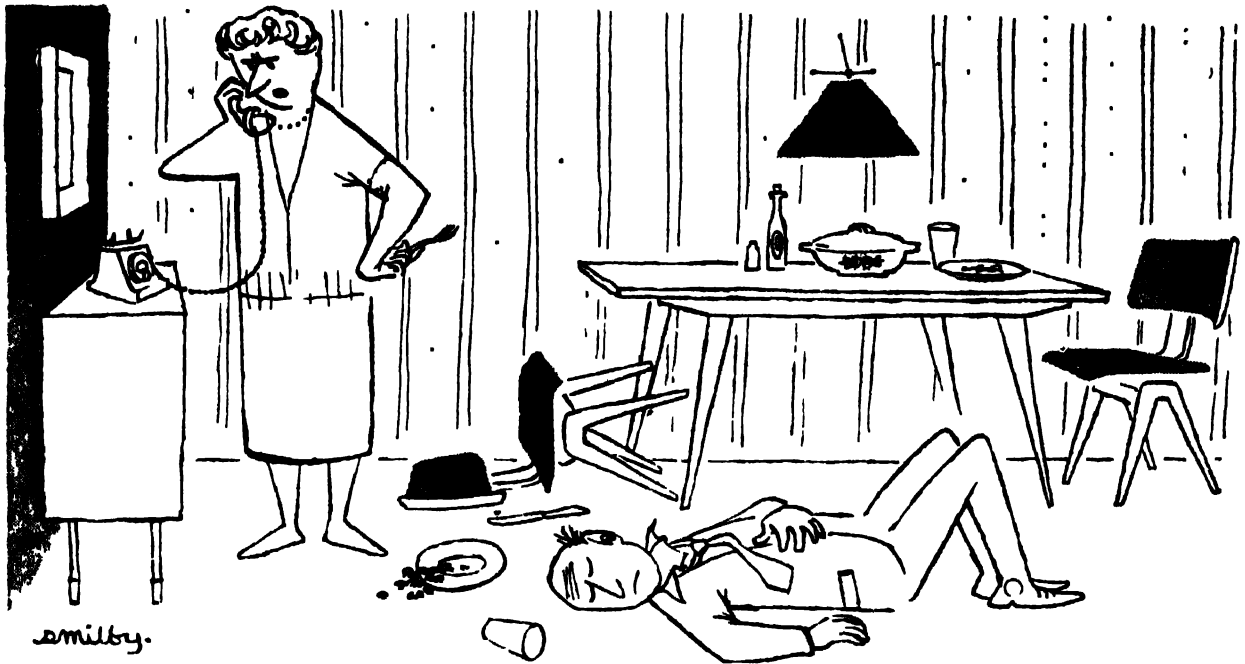
How delightful to have known Mr. Eliot,  
With his rolled umbrella  
And his bowler hat,  
When punctual on the final stroke of nine,  
Across the Bridge and down King William Street  
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth keeps the hour,  
He came to Lombard Street to make his mark  
Among staid bankers as a Confidential Clerk.

ERIC WURR



'A table near the orchestra, please.'





*'Now look here—you've charged me three-and-sixpence a half for these mushrooms.'*





## In the City



### Austerity the Enterprise Way

DURING the last war Bernard Shaw offered to meet Britain's armaments budget by a trifling adjustment in the alphabet. He maintained that the dropping of a few superfluous vowels would save enough labour, breath, ink, metal, paint and paper to lick the Germans and liquidate the National Debt.

Shaw wasn't the first philosopher to appreciate the value of apparently minor economies. There was the man who stalked into the head office of the old L.N.E.R. with a scheme calculated to save the company tens of thousands a year: 'Everybody knows you run a railway,' he told the startled directors, 'so why not eliminate the R and call yourselves the L.N.E.?'

And Shaw wasn't the last homespun do-gooder to prescribe painless nostrums for our financial ailments. At this moment the newspapers are busy advising us how to knock inflation, how to bring down the price of tea, how to rub Mr. Rising Price's nose in the dust. A single page of the *News Chronicle* contains these headlines—'Find those Cheaper Cuts,' 'Check the Prices on all those Tins,' 'This Pot knocks a Third off your Tea Bill.' We are told to eat less meat, fewer eggs, biscuits and oranges, and to drink less tea and coffee: if we carry out instructions prices will tumble.

Well, yes, of course they will. And when they've tumbled sufficiently and we are allowed to buy again, those 'damn ridiculous' prices will promptly sneak back again up to their perches. That's something the newspaper economists omit to mention. I should be much more grateful to the newspapers for their 'reduce-the-cost-of-living' campaign if they directed their propaganda at people in other countries, the very people whose *increased* consumption has made British prices rocket. Why not tell the Tunisians who now swill one and a third cups of tea per day (compared with our nearly five and a fifth), to cut out that one for the pot? And why not advise the Americans, who stupefy themselves with

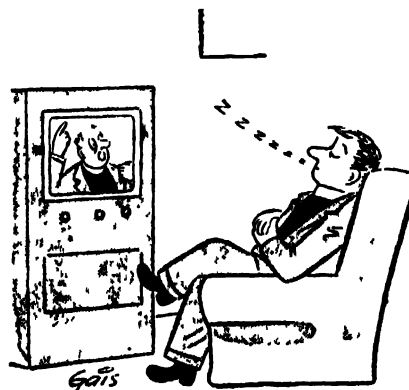
one quarter of a cup per person per day, that a casant infusion can be made from dried mulberry and dandelion?

But there's another, far more serious, point. The Fourth Estate may be pretty powerful, but I can't somehow see the rest of industry and commerce knuckling under and accepting its propaganda without a struggle. When the Press says 'Buy less tea' it does not necessarily mean 'Buy less tea and save pennies to spend on newspapers,' but the tea merchants may take the less charitable view, especially if they feel (as I do) that there is a likelihood of some increase in the price of certain newspapers.

What happens if Mr. Teapot (like Mr. Cube) retaliates with a campaign urging people to buy fewer papers? And what happens when Mr. Steak, Mr. Tooty-Fruity, Miss Cocktail and Master Humpty Dumpty join in with their own knocking schemes? Well, we might conceivably get back to the brand of austerity advocated by Sir Stafford Cripps—everybody saving like mad and consuming as little as possible, the City panicking, exports thriving, imports dwindling, and Mr. Butler trotting around with a perpetual grin.

And then again we might not.

MAMMON





## In the Country



### Horse Laugh

MY VET says he has every sympathy with Professor Frosnett, who was recently sent as representative of UNESCO to some remote island in the Pacific where sporadic orgies of cannibalism are known to occur. The Professor was instructed to make a report on the reason why the natives occasionally indulged in this diet in spite of repeated strictures against such practices from the Presbyterian mission there, and the fact that the island was sufficiently fertile to provide other forms of nourishment. Meanwhile a Permanent Committee sitting in Paris waited anxiously for his Memorandum. It was confidently expected that this would shed new light on the Roots of Culture and the Background of Primitive Mythology besides making international understanding in that area a trifle easier.

Twelve months elapsed and no report arrived, and it was generally feared that another scientist had sacrificed his life in the pursuit of knowledge or, as the Chairman appropriately put it: 'It seems dear Frosnett has gone the way of all human flesh.'

However, their cursory obsequies were curtailed by the sudden arrival of the long-anticipated report from the Professor himself, proving he was not only alive but pursuing his researches with his customary energy. The Committee was convened. The Memorandum was read: 'The reason why the natives eat each other is because they taste absolutely divine.'

'I don't see what that story has to do with my horses,' I said, somewhat nettled by the vet's facetiousness. 'Once you see how they're behaving, you'll realize I haven't dragged you here unnecessarily.'

We sloshed through the mud towards the field, our torches reflected in the mist. I was carrying a couple of halters and a pail of corn with which to entice the horses to the gate. I was most anxious that they should receive attention, for they are valuable animals, being a pair of the last shire horses in the district.

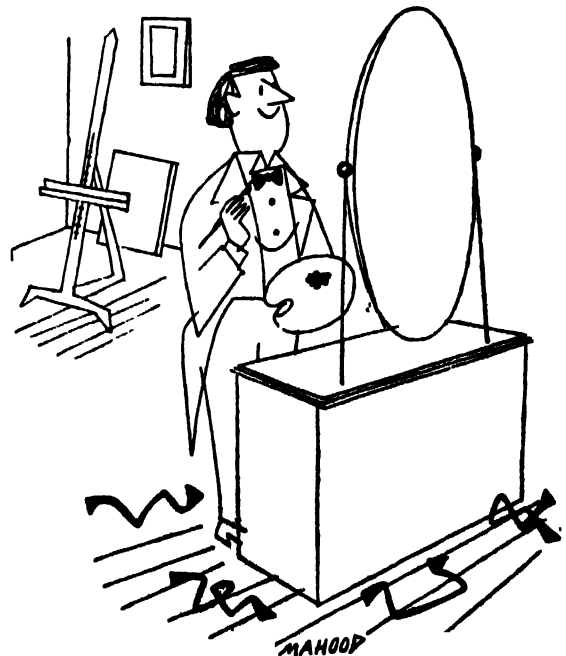
'Need we go right out to the field?' the vet com-

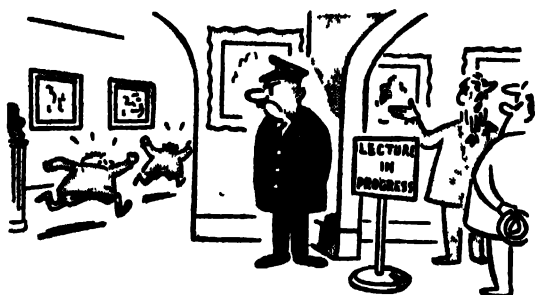
plained. 'From your description of their symptoms I tell you that a day in the loose-box will soon put them to rights.'

But I insisted. And dragged him out to the gate and began banging my pail. At this sound both horses bared their teeth and neighed hilariously. Then, cocking one eye, began to trot towards us. They didn't get very far: the first mare seemed to knit with her two front feet, then rolled on her flanks. The other merely sat on its rump and drooled.

'The reason why horses get drunk,' said the vet, 'is that they've nothing else to do. My advice is to get them to a loose-box when they're sober enough to stand, and remember to fence off that clump of fermented mangolds or they're bound to get tight again.'

RONALD DUNCAN





## Possible Explanation

*'Astounding! You've fitted me as good as my Savile Row tailor,' writes Col. J. W.—From an advertisement.*

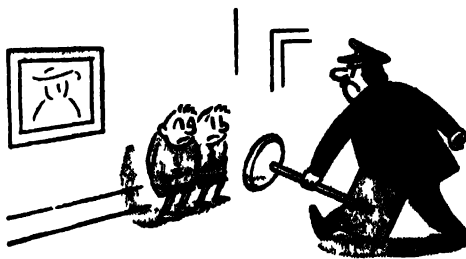
WARING had always believed that his natural talents were wasted in his job of bookmaker's tout, and when war came in 1939 he enlisted at once, determined to show the world that he was capable of better things. He succeeded so well that by 1945 he had attained the rank of colonel, and when the war ended he decided to make the Army his career. He was disappointed to find, however, that in peace time he seemed to be able to make no further progress. Work as he would, and scheme and plan as he might, he remained a colonel, and after some years of bitter frustration he sought out an old friend, General Barling, and asked for his advice.

'Well, my dear fellow,' said General Barling, 'it's not a thing I find easy to say, and I do hope you won't be offended with me, but the fact is that you don't speak grammatical English. It didn't matter much during the war, but I'm afraid it does now.'

'I've always thought,' said Waring stiffly, 'as how I spoke pretty good.'

'I'm afraid not. I wonder if you remember that time the Prime Minister visited us in St. Cleriot, and had lunch in the Mess? You should do, because he paid you a rather nice compliment. He said "Only last week a grim prospect gaped upon us all, and in the sombre gloom around us we could see no gleam of light. To-day we press forward, our feet upon the sunlit uplands. My friends, let us drink to Colonel Waring." You replied "I only done my duty, like what we all done." It was nothing, really: still, I saw him wince. Well, that's the sort of thing that's keeping you back now.'

'You've spoke out blunt, all right,' said Waring sharply, 'but you've not given me no help. If I've



talked impure all these years, I got a lot to get out of the habit of. How am I going to do it?"

'The first step, obviously,' said General Barling, 'is to take a course at a speech training school, or something of the kind. While you're doing that you should make a point of mixing as much as possible with people who speak faultless English. You spend most of your spare time on the racecourse, don't you? I should cut that out, if I were you. Try to strike up friendships with—well, good straight actors, say, or clergymen above the rank of vicar. People like that simply have to speak well. I mean, you'll wait a long time before you'll hear a double negative from a bishop, won't you? Another thing. Go to a really first-class tailor. If you don't mind me saying so, you won't get far with either the church or the stage in that purple affair you have on now.'

Colonel Waring felt that this was good advice, and he decided to take it. He was a likeable character and a good mixer, and he found no great difficulty in introducing himself into the sort of society recommended by General Barling. He became firm friends with a happy-go-lucky archdeacon of about his own age, and they went on a walking tour together. Waring felt that his failing was already less noticeable.

'You done me good, Jim boy,' he said, one sparkling autumn morning, as they shouldered their rucksacks in the doorway of their inn. 'I'll speak proper yet.'

'Of course you will, my dear chap,' replied the archdeacon. 'I'm sure of one thing, at any rate: you're not making half as many mistakes as what you was at the start of this here trip.'

However, the months went by, and the years, and still there was no promotion for Colonel Waring. He grew discouraged.

'It isn't no use, Em,' he said to his wife. 'I spent

a lot of dough over this here caper, and I've not got no farther. This suit as I'm wearing cost me fifty quid, and that there Sir Oliver Richards knocks back double gins like as if they was water. Then there's my elocution. I done my best to get on, but I don't want to promote myself into the bankruptcy court.'

He laid aside his dreams of fame, and gave up the elocution lessons, the new friends and the suits from Savile Row. As far as these were concerned the change seemed to him to make little or no difference, and he wrote to his new tailor, complimenting him on the fact. He might speak badly, he reflected as he did so, but at least his writing and spelling were first class.

T. S. WATT

## On Dipping into an Intelligence Test

*Supply the missing word:*

*(Analogies)*

*Elephant is to rose as — is to plant.*

*Skin is to fruit as — is to egg.*

ATOMS are to nucleus

As planets are to Sun

And tear-drops are to Tragedy

As laughter is to Fun.

The dipping yacht is to its helm

As stallion is to rider

And hemlock is to lethal glass

As apples are to cider.

The poet counts his golden words

As miser counts his riches

And Viscounts carry business men

As broomsticks carry witches.

A conscience is to criminals

As stomach-ache to gluttons

And man holds fast to faith and hope

As braces cling to buttons.

RONALD DEADMAN





## Lament for a Late Lord Mayor

IN MAY the weeds grow two inches each day, the Red Army and Young Communist ladies with short fat legs march through the Red Square, the earnest societies of folk dancers tie bells to their knees and splash through the puddles round maypoles, and this year's provincial Lord Mayor becomes last year's Lord Mayor. There is nothing so dead as last year's Lord Mayor—save the ex-general secretary of a trade union. In May, when everything else is fresh and full of promise, last year's chief civic dignitary faces a period of agonizing readjustment.

For a year he has been above politics, an eminence he has demonstrated in the Council Chamber by imposing the rules of order more firmly on his own

side than on the rest. He has been a shaker of royal hands, an opener of bazaars, the temporary father of the community, a man withdrawn, a man dedicated. Now he returns to the engineer's bench, the schoolroom and the office. No more patronizing interviews with his boss.

'I'll not be in to-morrow. I'm guest of honour at the Chamber of Commerce.'

From now on it is—'Do you think, Mr. Smith, that I might leave ten minutes early to-night for a meeting of the Street Drainage Committee?'

On cold winter nights in future he will stand in the bus queue in Town Hall Square watching this year's Lord Mayor sweep past in the mayoral limousine,

leaning forward to joke with the Mace Bearer, snugly covered with the plaid rug that kept his legs warm last winter.

When he was made Lord Mayor twelve months ago the year ahead had stretched out to infinity. After a few weeks he had forgotten that there had ever been another civic head. He might even have begun to act as though he had been born to the Robes with the Chain clutched in his baby fist—like the Mayor of a northern town who recently attended the funeral of a distinguished citizen. There was a crowd in the street where the great man had lived. The mayoral car, carrying His Worship in full regalia, drew up with the Lord Mayor sitting on the side away from the crowd. Apologetically he said to the aldermen and councillors with him, 'Mind if I move

over to the other side? They'd like to see that the Lord Mayor's turned up.' And he clambered over their legs to nod gravely to the crowd.

As they drew near the chapel the crowd was on the other side of the car. Again, clumsily, with much heaving and grunting, the Lord Mayor changed places. As they reached the cemetery the same thing happened again.

One alderman could stand it no more. 'Sithee, lad,' he said, 'they've not turned up to see thy chain. They've turned up to see Old Joe's funeral. And he hasn't moved once since we started.'

Most Labour Lord Mayors, however, will have taken care to shed the pomp of office when they mixed with other folk. The caustic tongue of a colleague is a whip to be feared by any who would



presume to put on side. The Lord Mayor has been watched with suspicion. If he has shown a tendency to hobnob with Tory aldermen or to kowtow to the Rotary Club someone will have seized an opportunity to hand him a crisp reminder. 'Well, you'll be back as vice-chairman of the Sewage Committee, Jim. Beats me how we've managed without you this twelve-month.'

Now he has to rehabilitate himself with those who are confident they would have made a better mayor. He has to come to terms with those whose turn for the mayoralty is some years ahead, and who profess to scorn the gewgaws and frippery, the Chain, the Mace, and the Robes, as symbols of an outworn traditionalism. They reject it as an office which smacks of the *petit bourgeoisie*; it is not in the spirit of the New Dawn. The political emancipation of the workers, they feel, is not achieved when a railway fireman becomes Lord Mayor. Now he has to surpass them in militancy. He will search the minutes of the General Purposes Committee for items on which he can demonstrate his class solidarity.

In a few months' time, because he is usually level-headed, he will be in the thick of the battle again. His greatest moment will come at next year's mayoral reception when a colleague sampling the cress sandwiches says, 'Well, lad, I reckon you put up a better show than this.'

Soon all that remains will be a mounted, coloured photograph in the front room, and, as the front room is used only on Sundays, it will not haunt him overmuch with memories of glory past. But last year's Lady Mayoress may be forgiven if, as she dusts it, she stands and dreams awhile.

WILFRED FIENBURGH



'How's about a coupla ringsides for tonight, Jack?'

## Net Result—?

EVERY day, by patient skill and industry, the frontiers of knowledge are pushed a little farther outwards. Take the soiling of net curtains. For many years now the fact that these contrivances get damned dirty in a sooty atmosphere has been half suspected by the ordinary housewife as she crouches behind them in an effort to see what the neighbours are up to. But half-suspicions are not knowledge. You cannot make them into graphs or express them as percentages. You can scarcely even draw any valid conclusions from them, except perhaps that it is time the curtains were washed.

That the cold white light of certainty has at long last, in this post-Coronation year of 1954, been shed on the hitherto dimly-illuminated question of curtain fouling is due entirely to the energy and initiative of the Electrical Association for Women. While the rest of the world went carelessly on its way this devoted band (of whom some of my readers will perhaps be hearing for the first time) set themselves resolutely to prove that net curtains get dirtier in manufacturing cities like Leeds and Manchester than in such quiet oases as Abinger Hammer and Midhurst. They succeeded. This in itself need occasion no surprise; indeed, professional scoffers may claim that the result was a foregone conclusion and that a more fooling waste of time and money than this inquiry could hardly be conceived by the mind of man. But it is not the result so much as the manner of its presentation that excites respect. What the professional scoffer forgets is that *statistics are the basis of all good government*, and you cannot have statistics without a proper inquiry. Let him, before he scoffs too freely, ask himself: What percentage of housewives in large towns wash their net curtains once a month? He has no idea. But the Electrical Association for Women can tell him. As the result of a questionnaire sent to hundreds of net-curtain users all over the country the Association are able to state without fear of contradiction that 'thirty-nine per cent of housewives in large towns wash their curtains every month, while none let them go dirty longer than six months,' whereas in rural areas 'only three per cent do a monthly wash, thirty-eight per cent wash their curtains every three months, and twenty-eight per cent





every six.' Two per cent wash them only once a year, the scallywags.

Significant as these figures are—you have only to express them as a graph of washings against smoke-emission per acre-hour to see how the laundry-frequency curve rises as the soot falls—the E.A.W. were not content. Percentages, unless supported by independent evidence, may easily mislead, and it was still necessary to show, as the *Manchester Guardian* rightly points out, that 'the high frequency of curtain washing in the large towns was not a result of custom or excessive "house-proudness." ' The Association, in other words, were determined to produce *conclusive* proof that soot makes curtains dirty. To this end, they took the trouble to hang new net curtains at windows in six carefully selected places in England and leave them suspended there for the space of one lunar month. At the beginning and end of this period

they measured the reflectivity of the surface of each of these curtains—what the layman would call its 'whiteness'—by means of a photo-electric reflectometer.

Times change, and science continually brings new aids to the patient investigator. In the old days, when I and my colleagues of the Men's Gaslight League were trying to show that the incidence of rats was higher in small sewers than in the operating theatres of large hospitals, we had no such instruments to help us. We had to rely entirely on our own observations down manholes and such evidence as could be got from patients coming out from under anaesthetics. But that is no criticism of the E.A.W., who rightly availed themselves of all the assistance they could get in their complex investigation. The reflectometer results, based on a reading of one hundred for snow-white linen, are worth quoting in full:

Net curtain, new. All districts . . . 85

Ditto after one month. Abinger Hammer 78-82; Midhurst 78-82; Clapham 72-78; Corby 68-76; Manchester 64-70; Leeds! (my exclamation mark) 50-58.

There is practically no limit to the things that can be done with these figures by a statistician worth his salt. They can be multiplied by population densities to prove that the weekly wash is heavier per square mile in Manchester than in Abinger Hammer. They can be put on a map of England in the form of horizontal and vertical shadings to show areas with a net-curtain reflectivity-drop of more or less than twenty-five per cent per lunar month. They can be plotted against the washing-frequency percentages to produce a house-proudness curve. They could, with a little trouble, be compared with the figures for detergent sales in each area and thus help soap-kings to plan their autumn campaigns.

But what the Electrical Association for Women actually did with them was probably the best. They bundled them up in a Report, together with some additional information that I haven't time to go into now about the average time per family per week spent on washing and ironing, and sent the whole lot to the Government's committee on air pollution.

The next move is with the committee. My guess is that they will put the Report in a carefully selected pigeon-hole and leave it there for the space of at least one solar year.

H. F. ELLIS

# How to Kill a Man in Six Efforts: *by Ronald Searle*





# Soccer in Excelsis

*Being a footnote to the rapturous article in last Wednesday's 'Times'*

**MOMENTS** there are when the Muse of History herself takes pity on the barren field of English sport and plants therein a near immortal blossom, a flower of purple dye. Brightness is stayed from falling. Badminton it may be, or Table Tennis, no longer lie at the proud foot of a conqueror. A faultless round is ridden, the mile is ours. We hear how nobly Hutton stood, a willow in his hands. We lift our cool brows to tyrants, be they Egyptian or Persian, Hungarian or Greek. And such a moment surely it was at Molyneux Road, when the serried ranks of Muscovy reeled back before our chosen champions till the last tucket sonnance found them finally beaten by four goals to nil. That ciphering must stand for ever to our credit on a new entablature of the Temple of Fame.

There is the hub, the rub of it. There the nub. There floats freely our oriflamme. Yet truth compels us to say, if we are saying anything, that pendulous for long hung destiny, the battle doubtful, might matched with might before the must was made.

And what a must it was when three times within five minutes the dark custodian from the Steppes, no sop to soothe him, gave passage to the invaders' power, three times in that short space the volleys of the marauding Midlanders made contact with the net.

Well may it give us pause. Where Albion failed, where Arsenal faltered, these young Wolves, by unerring instinct, seemed to know along what paths the red slayer might best be slain, and these they wisely followed.

Did the shade of Wulfruna, King Edgar's sister, look down from St. Peter's Church on those lists of chivalry? Did the statue of the Prince Consort permit itself a momentary smile? Possibly not. There is no record of these things, nor yet can we more than wonder if a scowl passed over the features of the departed Lenin, or of the mighty Stalin himself, where embalmed they possibly repose. Tears live in an onion, and maybe in the Kremlin's dome.

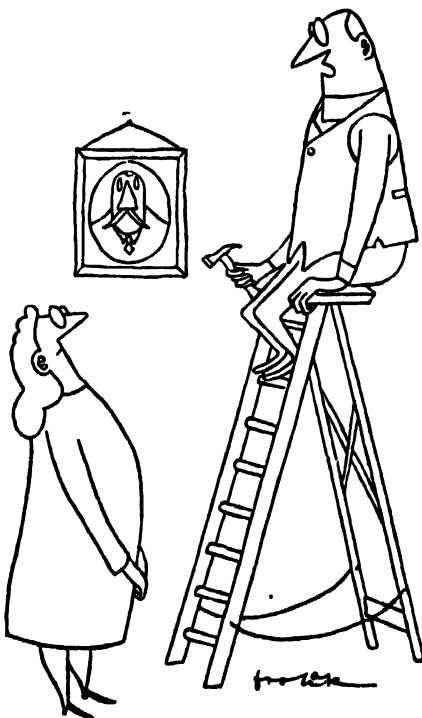
Yet were they no easy victims, these Spartacists, as

the white orb flew from man to man, Dian seemingly fallen from her unseen throne, and delicate tracery was mingled with stark robustitude. From Touchline to Backache it travelled, and to Touchline returned again, till none but Netto failed of his eponymous rôle, but always the feet of Wright were steady, always the attack was served until the carronading boots of his forwards were graced with wreaths of victory.

Tumult was all the air, full throated came the roar of sixty thousand watchers, necks muffled to the misty night, made fulgent for the nonce. Aching were the eyes of four million home-housed citizens, glued like storm-driven sea birds to the television screen, breath held, hearts palpitant. To them too, far off, came the clamour that rent the smog when Wilshaw drove the first blow home, England embraced and Spartak stood discomfited. The tide was turned. Yet none expected that last quick flowering nor final fruitage that followed the pattern of unsparing enterprise. These goals are like to last in memory for ever, jewels on the stretched forefinger of all time pointing the way that football should go to footballers yet to come, to pæans of the future in phrases still uncogitated.

All praise to Broadbent and to Shorthouse and the little roaming Hancocks, shod with wings of gold. The game was played with the exquisite courtesy of Spanish grandees, and if the faces of the Wanderers were wreathed in such smiles as Licinius Crassus may have worn when the original Spartacus fell, yet the Russians, as though acknowledging the greater stamina and greater skill that swept them to the maelstrom of their doom, passed out with the heroic fortitude of gladiators, down-thumbed by an Imperial hand. Co-existence triumphed in the mud; and now at long last is scraped the rust from England's sword.

Pushtov was exchanged for Bashtov five minutes before the end.



'Well, it doesn't look too high to me.'



'Say "How d'you do".'

# M.P.s 'Forgotten,' say Troops

'MANY of us feel that our boys at Westminster are in danger of becoming a forgotten Parliament,' said Trooper Nick Barker on his return to B.A.O.R. to-day. He is the leader of a delegation of private soldiers who have just completed a week's tour investigating welfare conditions among Members of Parliament. The other soldiers on the delegation are Private Jim Maggs, Private Bert Long, Gunner Tom Peters, Driver, Jack Plimsoll and Acting Lance-Corporal Keith Franckenstein.

During their tour the delegation saw M.P.s at work in the Chamber and Committee Rooms, and also visited the Smoking Room, the Tea Room, the Terrace and other welfare installations.

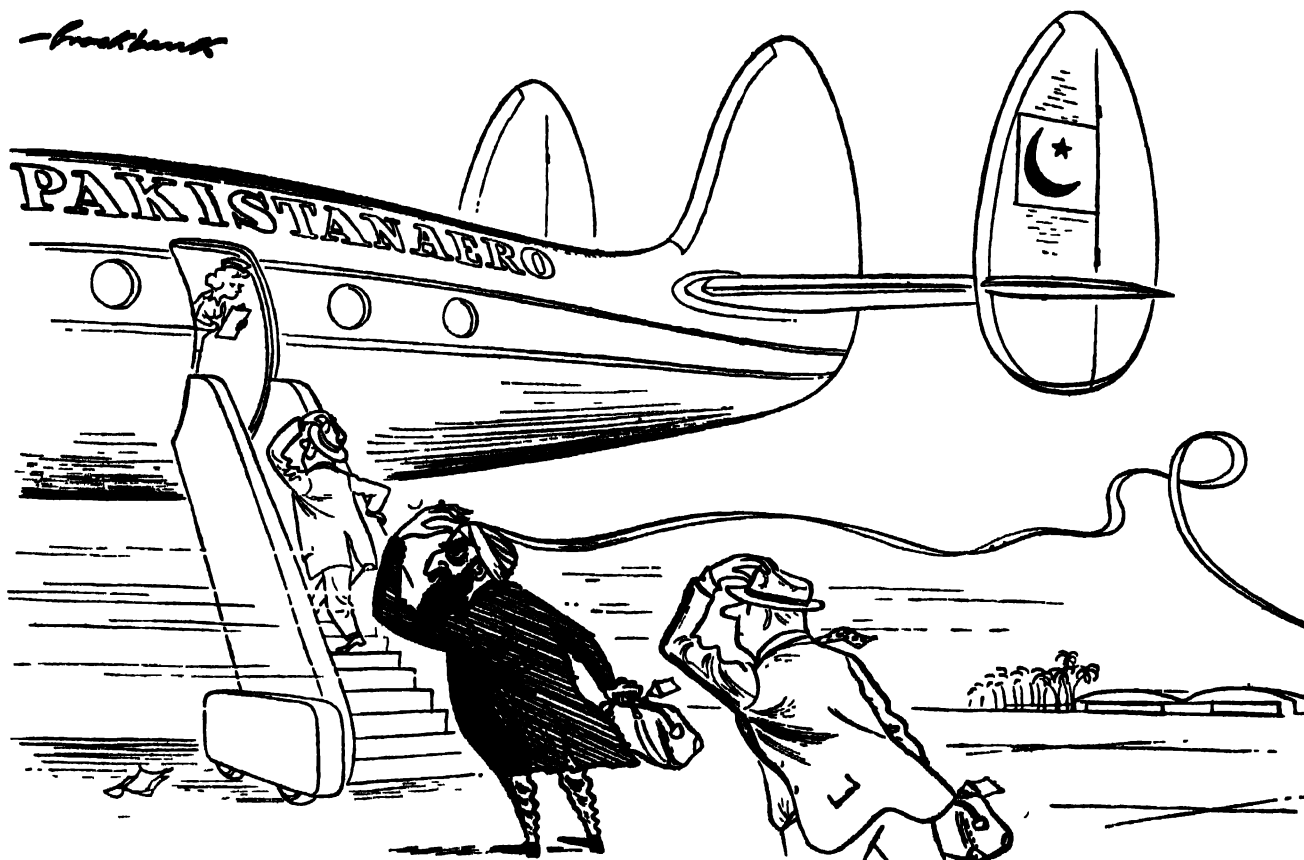
'I spoke to a number of the Members,' said

Trooper Barker, 'and there is no doubt that a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction exists among them.' Among the matters complained of were the inadequate rates of pay and allowances, the long hours of compulsory attendance at the House, and the boring nature of the speeches there.

'These may seem small things in themselves,' Trooper Barker said, 'but added together they can produce a real sense of grievance, with the result that Members get "browned off" with their work and wander off on tours of China, Israel, B.A.O.R., and so on.'

Preliminary work on the delegation's report was begun to-day by Private Long.

'We had a right good tour,' he said. 'Every facility



was given us to speak direct with back-bench Members, with the result that we got things straight in a way we would never have done if we had had to go through the usual procedure of P.R.O.s, under-secretaries and all that kind of bull.'

Among the matters noted, said Private Long, were many that would have to be the subject of long-term action, but some ought to be put right immediately. For example, several Members complained of the inadequacy of their mail. 'Mail is a very potent factor in morale-building,' Private Long said, after one or two false starts. 'If a Member does not receive regular complaints from his constituents he is thrown on to his own resources when it comes to putting down questions, and this is bound to lead to a lowering of standards and undue emphasis on such unprofitable subjects as helicopters and that kind of lark, which do not really affect his constituents at all.'

It was inevitable that an M.P.'s life should be fraught with hardship and tedium, but the delegation felt that some problems were being considered with too much complacency. 'These men are the flower of our democracy, and are very often the examples by which foreigners form their opinion of our nation. They are all volunteers, and they have to serve sometimes for many years without any relief other than a month at Christmas and Easter and about four months' recess in the summer, much of which may possibly be spent serving on a parliamentary commission in some place like Israel or Jamaica, with no reward but their bare expenses.'

Nothing should be too good for them. Unless their stay at Westminster was made thoroughly worth while, both socially and financially, there would be an ever-increasing number of Members investigating conditions in Service garrisons overseas, and no one would want to see that.

The report was agreed unanimously.

B. A. YOUNG



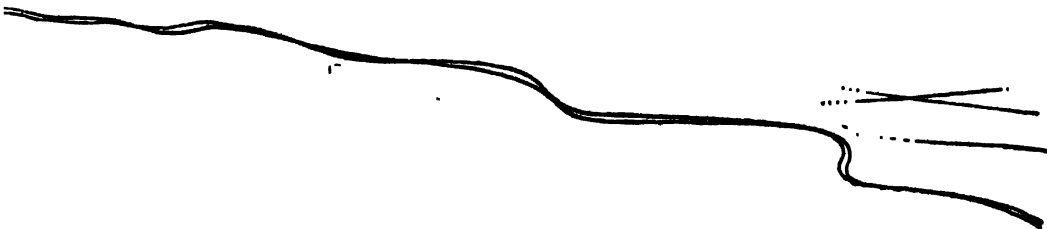
Eric Slegin

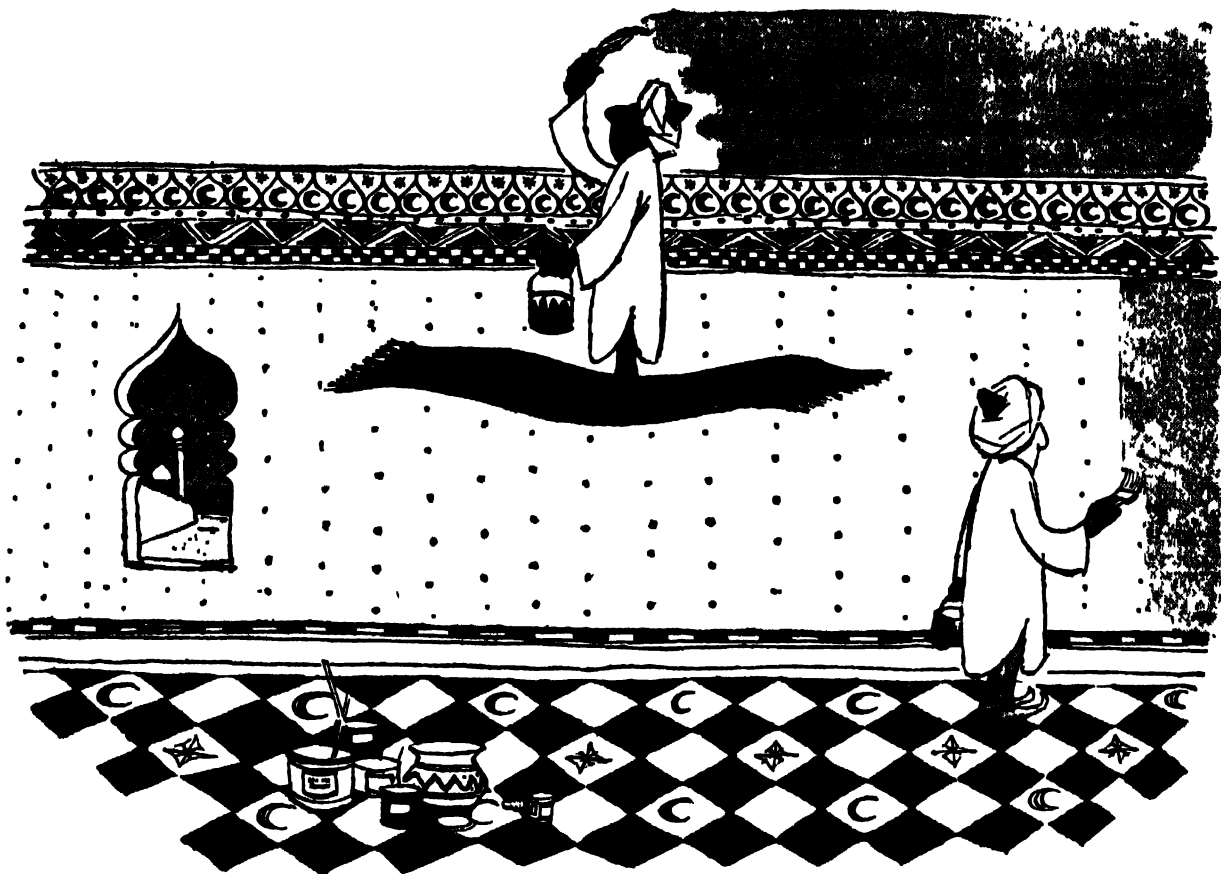
'Touched!'

## The Teddy Boys' Picnic

IF YOU go down to the woods to-day  
 You'd better go in disguise  
 With drain-pipe trews  
 And fancy shoes  
 And something intense in ties—  
 Don't bother to wash (It's sure to rain)  
 But take your cosh and bicycle chain—  
 To-day's the day the Teddy Boys have their  
 picnic.

MARK BEAVAN





## On the Mat

THE mat is but a stone's throw from Victoria Station. It is a canvas mat, padded with fibre and felt, covering the floor of a good-sized room. On it are two men dressed in regulation costumes of Japanese cotton: loose jackets 'just long enough to cover the hips,' loose trousers not long enough to cover the ankles, loose belts. One of them is a clerk from Whitehall, the other a bus conductor from Croydon.

They kneel, facing one another, on the mat, bow down their heads as though to an invisible Emperor, touching the mat with their foreheads, and sit for a moment, with legs crossed beneath them, in apparent contemplation. They sit in silence, obeying an injunction on the wall: 'The Dojo is the shrine for Judo and sanctuary for the Judoka, therefore in it should prevail cleanliness and quiet': and this is the

Dojo. Presently they rise and, fiercely but politely, in cleanliness and quiet, start to tear with both hands at one another's cotton clothing.

The place of the mat is the Budokwai, where the people of London and its suburbs, male and female, meet to defend themselves against their neighbours according to the precepts of a Way of Knighthood, martial but gentle: the way of Judo. One after another they are coming in, from their shops and their offices, their trains and their buses, wearing cherry-blossom badges with an abracadabra in the centre, but soon shedding suits and skirts to emerge, transformed for the evening into white Japanese, wearing belts of different colours according to status.

They begin to talk gently—outside the shrine—of *osoto-gari* and *uchi-mata*, *tsukuri* and *kake*; or to ponder



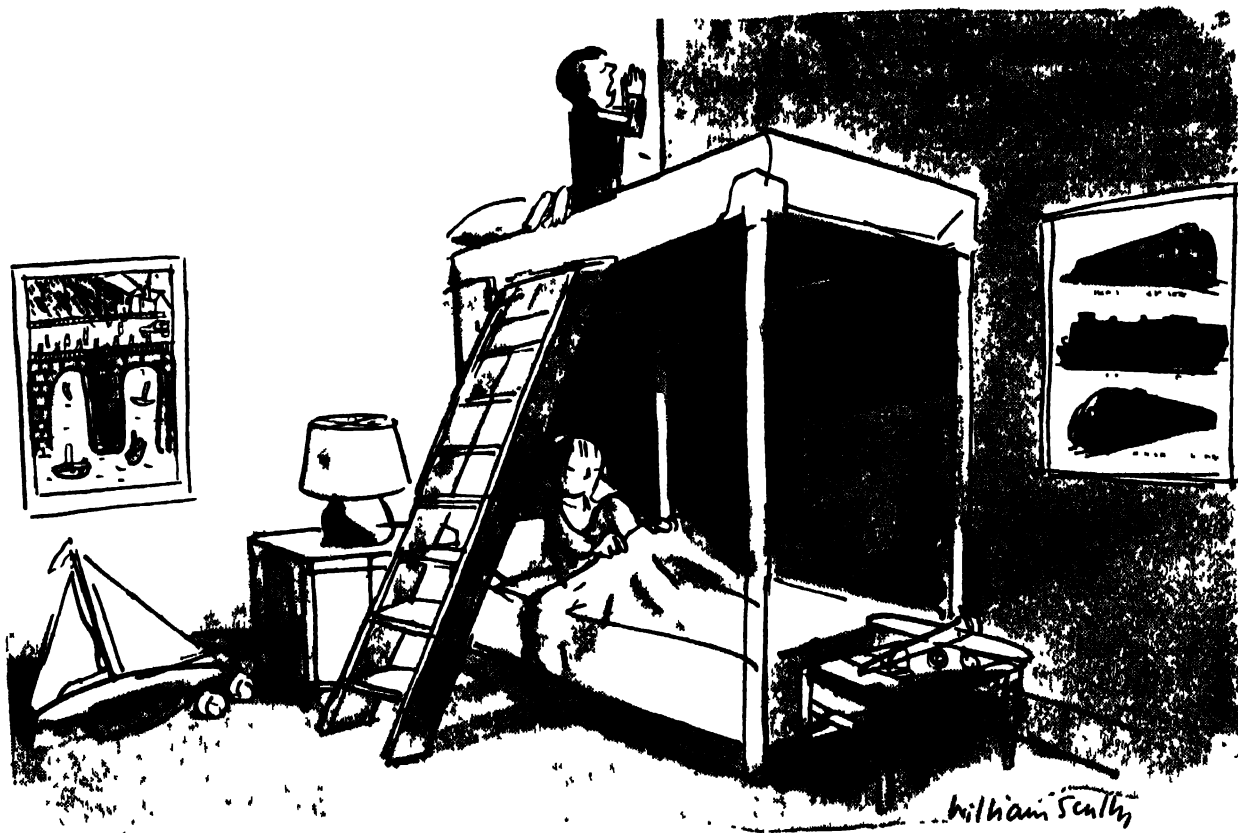
silently how best to put each other out of action, whether temporarily or permanently. Shall it be by a lock 'applied to the arms, legs, body, in such a way as to produce dislocation of the joints'; by 'striking, or kicking, the vital nerve centres' in order to paralyse the opponent; or by strangling, 'applied to the neck, to reduce the opponent to a state of coma by stopping the blood circulation to the brain'? And, once in a state of coma, shall he be resuscitated or not?

In the quarterly Bulletin ('No great teacher has despised the written word') they read with dreamy anticipation of the 'heavenly knock-out' (downward with the fist at the middle of the crown of the head), the 'sun and the moon' (with the fist or knee at the roots of the eyebrows), or the 'bright star' (with the

fist, elbow, knee or foot at a position about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches below the navel).

Before stepping on to the mat they read the notices on the wall: 'If you are losing blood on the canvas stop practising . . . Please see that your finger and toenails are cut short . . . Be ever mindful to learn, for the wise can learn from the fool more than the fool can learn from the wise . . . Good homes are needed for three puppies . . .'

Soon half a dozen couples are on the mat, defending themselves busily. The silence of the Dojo is broken only by their laborious panting for breath, by the swish of their bare feet across the canvas, by the explosion of an occasional Japanese shout, and by the frequent slap of bodies, flat-out on the canvas. ('In order to make the practice more safe and



*'... and keep me safe from falling out. Amen.'*

enjoyable, at the moment the opponent's body comes into contact with the ground a slight lift is given to one of his arms and shoulders.') The pervading scent of canvas and cotton is gradually sweetened by that of a gentle sweat, like ripening apricots.

Londoners, all, from Bloomsbury and Beckenham, Edgware and Ruislip and Golder's Green, watched over by a real Japanese, a sage in these matters, they tug away, face to face, 'pulling and pushing, resisting and non-resisting, concentrating and de-concentrating,' striving continuously to unbalance one another in order to ward off threats of attack not always apparent.

One, 'about to take a side step with his right foot, in a buoyant manner,' abruptly finds himself reaped to the mat by a sweeping ankle. Another, intending to trip up his opponent, is lightly flung over his shoulder, like a towel, turned over his hip, as over a parallel bar, wound around him, or wheeled along the mat, 'the foot as the hub, the body as the spoke.'

'If it's well done,' whispers an onlooker, 'it's ever so exhilarating to be thrown.'

So they smite one another, sweeping hip and floating thigh, always scrupulous, as Japanese gentlemen are, not to squeeze head or kidneys, press faces, 'twist or bend fingers, wrists, toes, jaw, head and spine.' And thus they rise in the belted hierarchy, humble Kyus becoming honourable Dans, white belts becoming yellow, orange, green, blue, brown and, most honourably, black.

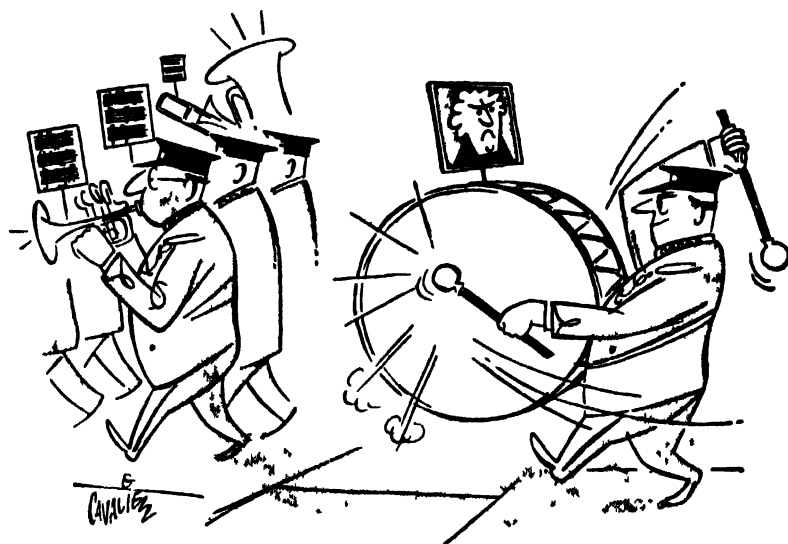
Downstairs there is another mat, and on this the ladies of London are defending themselves, even more fiercely, against each other. Breathing heavily, eyes alight, hair awry, cheeks flushed with excitement, shorthand-typists and saleswomen, beauticians, kennel-maids, probationary nurses, they prepare themselves, on the mat, to meet the hazards of London life outside. A Permanent Under-Secretary from a Whitehall Ministry, 2nd Dan and Dame of the British Empire, watches over them, spectacled, alert and impassive, occasionally commanding, 'Come back on the mat!' as, in the fervour of self-defence, one lady begins to flatten her opponent against the wall.

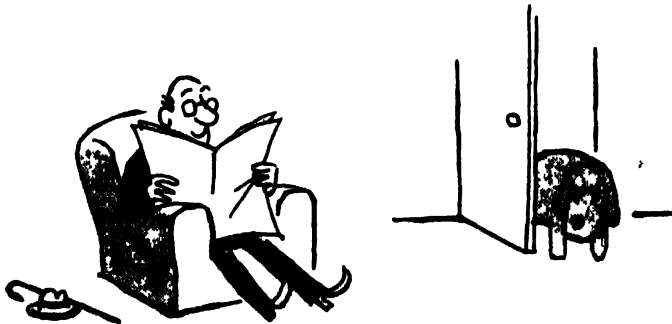
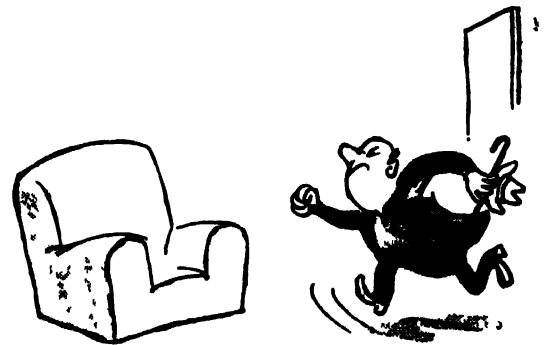
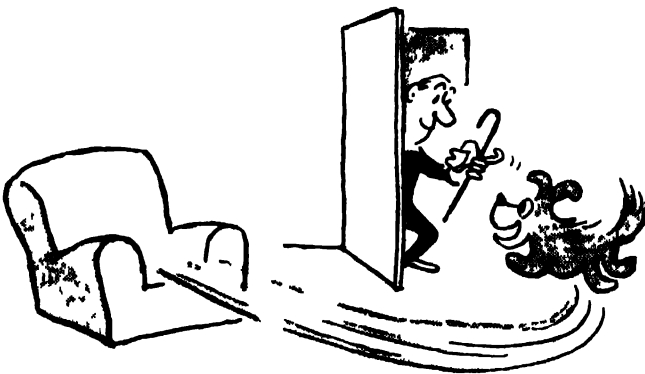
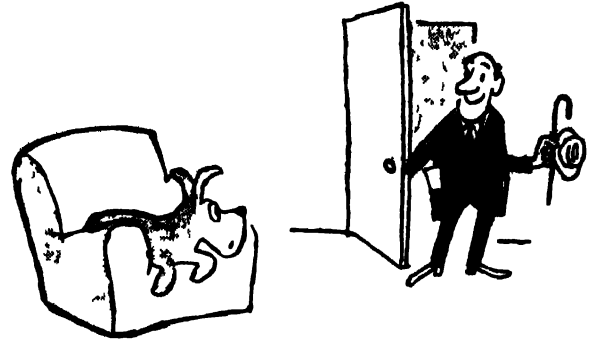
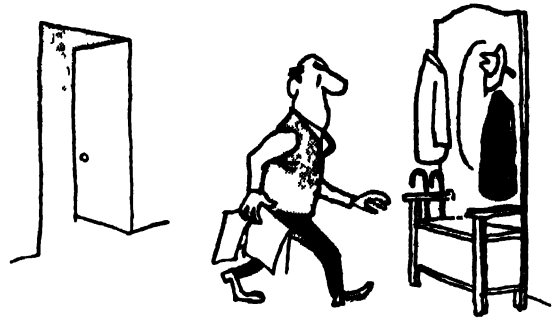
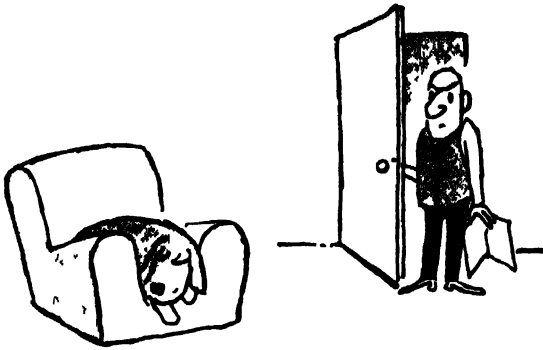
'Novices,' remarks a black-belted onlooker critically. 'Stiff as lamp-posts with drunken men clinging around them. Like a willow tree with snow on its branches, dipping to slide off the load. That's how it'll be when we get in among the belts.'

So, a pattern of willows, they dip out into the night, walking home, fearless of footpads, across the loneliest commons, down the murkiest alleyways.

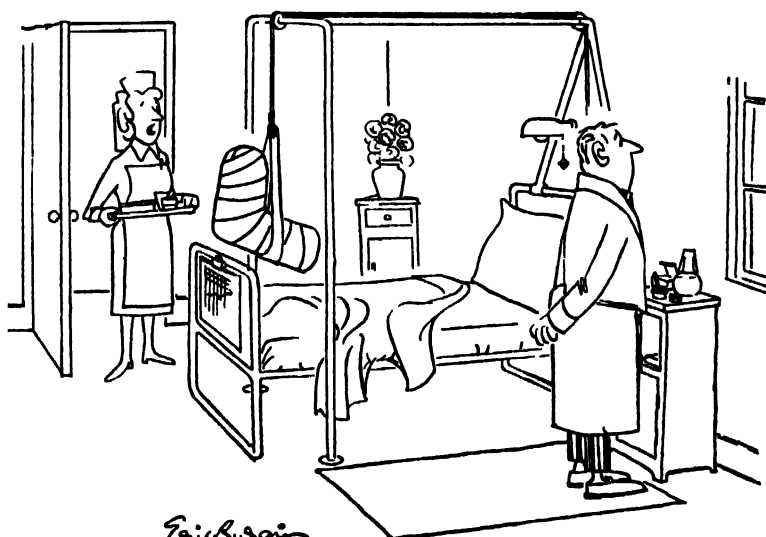
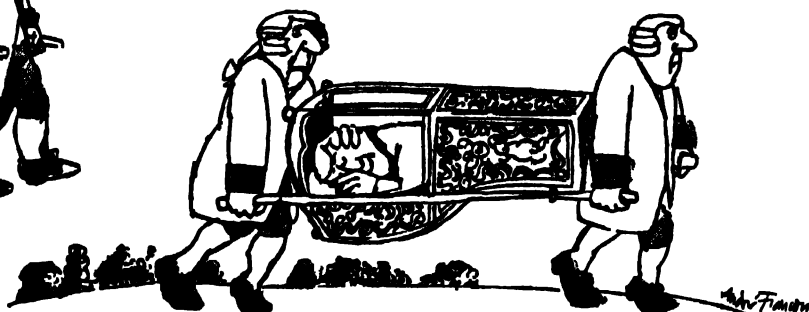
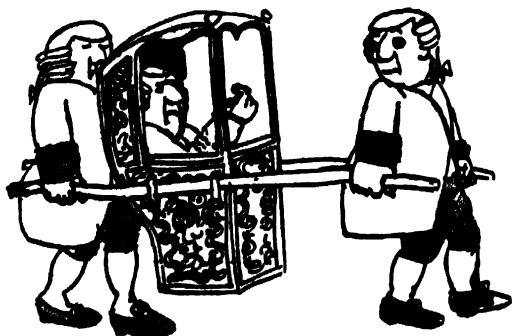
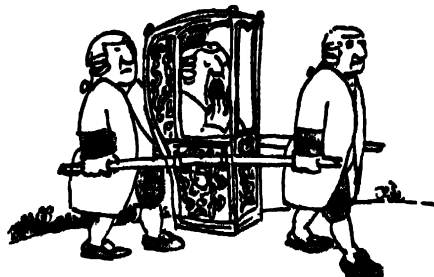
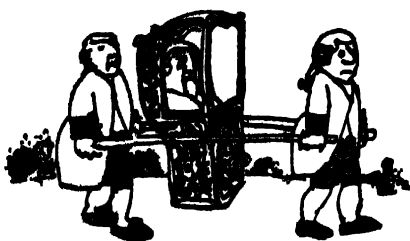
These, says the sage, are humdrum considerations. Self-defence is a beginning, not an end. The end is mere human perfection, universal morality, 'the equilibrium of opposites in all things of life, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.' There is much, it might seem, to be learnt from former enemies.

LORD KINROSS





AFWIES



*Eric Burgein*

'And who said you could get up, Mr. Bromley?'

# Sir St\*ph\*n T\*ll\*nts is on Holiday

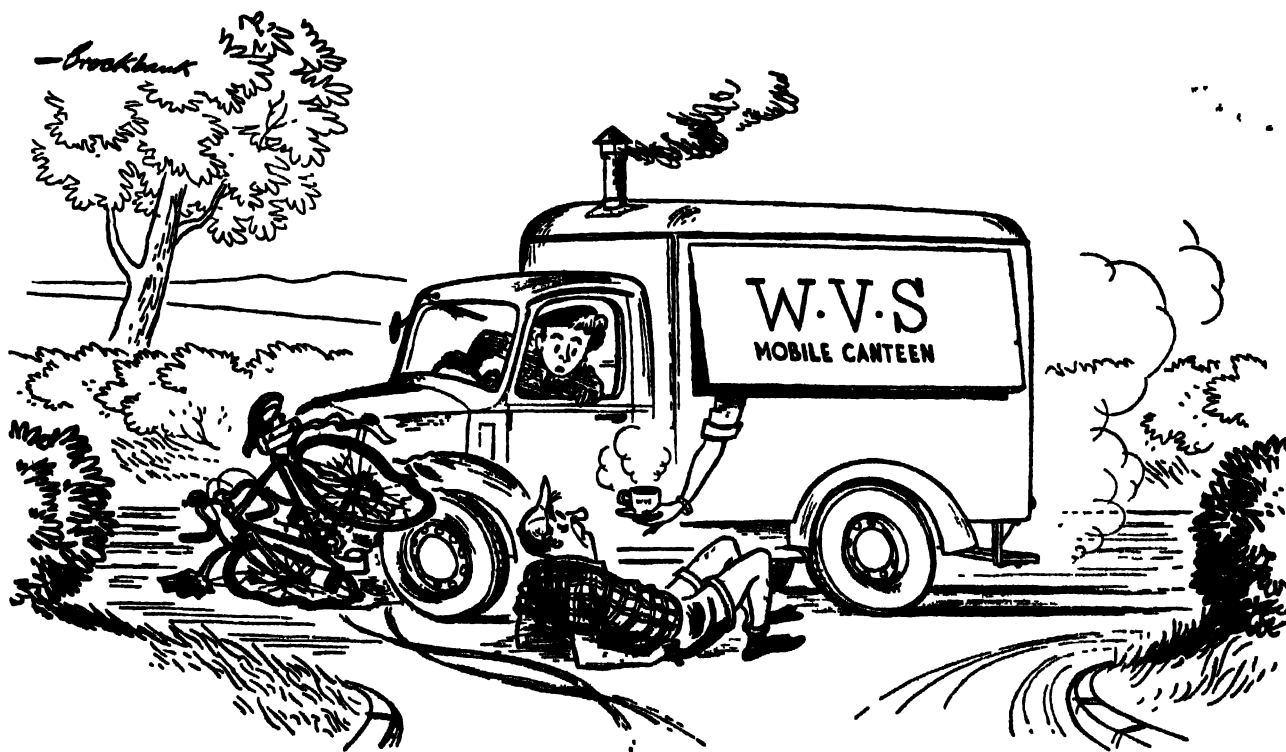
*Which gives me an opportunity, long sought, to put on my moleskin waistcoat and wattle a few withies on my own account*

IT is early days yet, of course, to start cutting, for the osier beds in the far corner of my little property are still in full leaf. But a kind friend in Shropshire has sent me a gimbling hook (it has inverted times set obliquely to the circular blade which make it possible with a little practice, she assures me, to gather and slash the wabe in a single movement) and I am anxious to try it out. The hook is drawn across the body with a full two-handed swish, the action, in rhythm and timing, resembling that of scything which (as I told my readers recently, and shall tell them again many times) brings with it a sense of peace and fulfilment unique among the occupations open to an English country gentleman.

When I have stacked and dried the osier withies I intend to weave them into innumerable baskets.

Week-end guests this past year have been complaining of a shortage of home-made receptacles in which to gather the toadstools, thistledown, cuckoo-spit, oak apples and so on that they delight to add to my store. So when the cherrywood logs are ablaze on the hearth some tender blue-grey evening in November (readers will remember the old orchard I cut down so enjoyably, with two quotations from the *Georgics*, some thirty issues ago), I shall settle down in my Queen Anne chair and, after 'scalluming' the rods with a picking-knife, begin the intricate process of waling up the sides of my baskets.

Oak apples, when soaked in a pint of white wine vinegar with a few elder leaves, make an old-fashioned lotion for the removal of freckles, but alas! I have mislaid my great-grandmother's receipt for





cuckoo-spit (for its household use, that is to say; the making of artificial cuckoo-spit is, to me, an abomination, when nature's bounty is so readily at hand). Can it be spun, or perhaps blown, into small bags, which could then be filled with dried henbane and put away with the double damask dinner napkins a kind friend has sent me from Connemara?

★ ★ ★

How infinitely rich is the pageant of beauty that August spreads for squire and peasant alike. Already a delicate bloom informs the slow-ripening clusters in my vinery, and the ragwort makes a carpet in the fields for less fortunate folk. All this, and thatching too! But the roof, sadly tattered by last sennight's gales, of the spare summer-house where I am wont to rest my bones when the sun is westering, must wait

awhile. For I am vowed, ere Michaelmas with its muffins be come, to try my 'prentice hand at matching my maternal grandmother's sampler, which daily reproaches me from its place of honour by the still-room door. The art of embroidering on cheese is all but lost, so it will be a rare feather in my cap if I have one or two amateur designs framed ready for Christmas. My grandmother, of course, worked with silk spun from her own silkworms. The temptation is strong. But it will be time enough when the partridges are in the stubble to think of planting mulberries in a sunny corner of the lawn.

★ ★ ★

Meanwhile, the Great Reed Mace flourishes unchecked in the stream at the bottom of the sunken gardens. This, the *Typha latifolia* of the botanists,

though commonly misnamed by the general, is not the Bulrush of the Scriptures. It was *Scirpus lacustris*, the true Bulrush (a corruption, incidentally of 'pool-rush,' so that doyen of water-plant connoisseurs, my old friend Sir Andrew Cullompton, informs me), which cradled the infant Moses; unless, indeed, as some Hebrew scholars aver, 'Paper-reed' (*Cyphorus papyrus*) is a more correct rendering of the original.

Be that as it may, I must gird up my loins and plunge once again, armed with sickle, rake and snarling-iron, into my little brook. I am never happier, as I have many times pointed out, than

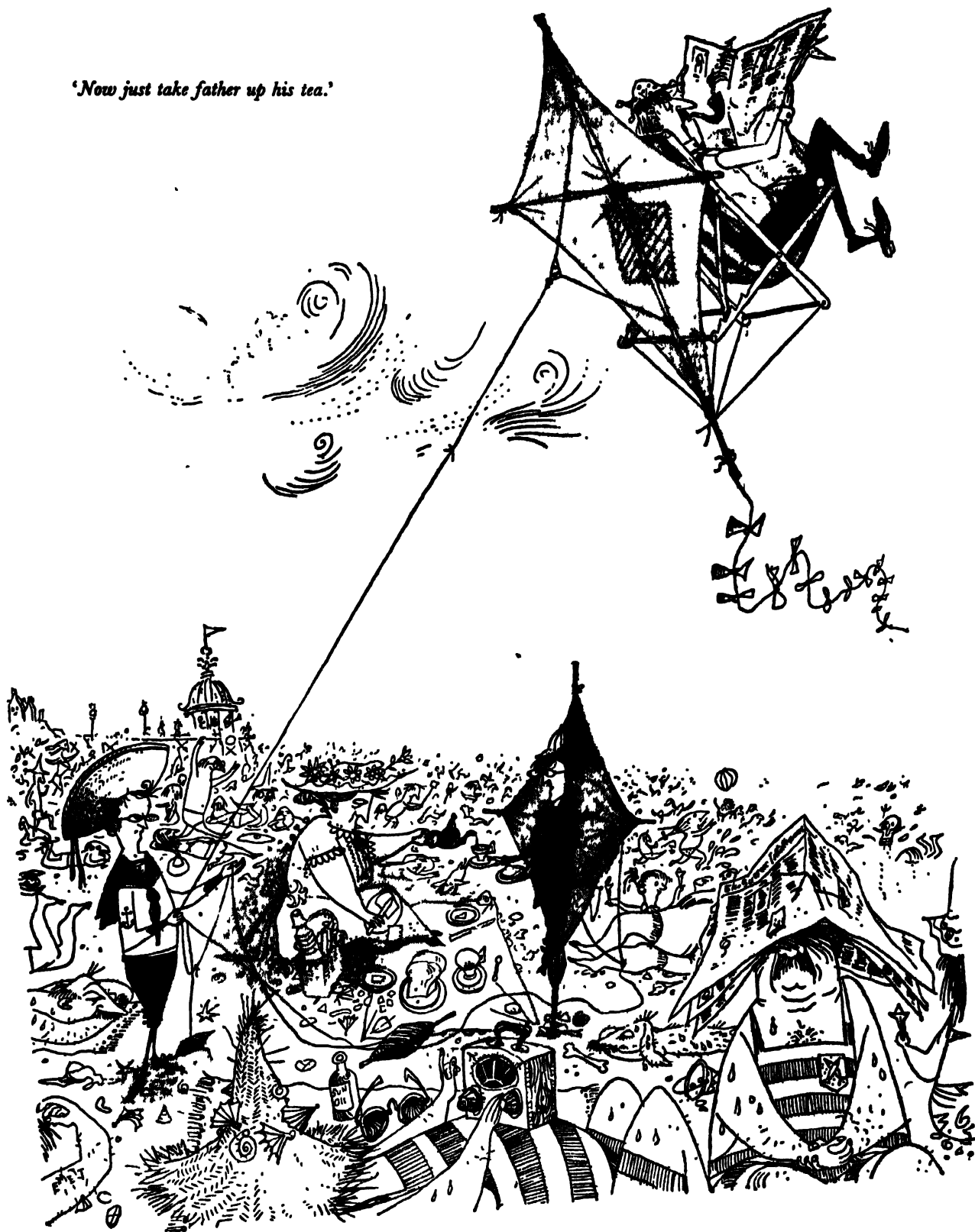
when up to my armpits in thick mud, grubbing up the reeds, sedges and old bicycle tyres that threaten to choke the streamlet's murmurous chuckle. Indeed a kind reader from the Wen wonders how it is, since I spend so much time Pan-like 'spreading ruin and scattering bane,' that there can be anything left to eradicate from my long-suffering brook. May I remind him that *Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret?* I shall be disappointed indeed if I do not manage to dredge up another five or six hundred words for *The Sunday Times*.

H. F. ELLIS



*'There's a right of way clearly indicated.'*

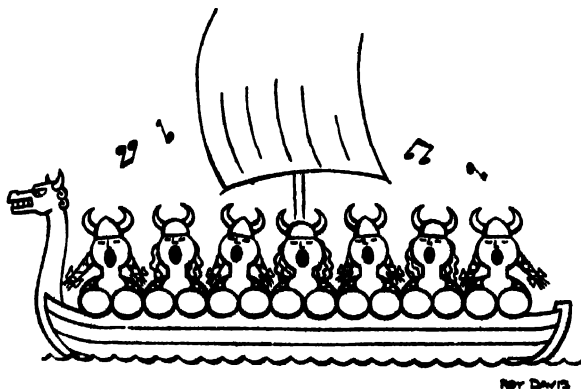
*'Now just take father up his tea.'*







*'I'm afraid I'm a very negative conversationalist.'*



# THE SEVEN HEADLAMPS OF MOTOR ENGINEERING

BY JOHN RASKIN

I. In considering the use of deceitful mouldings, chromium-plated accretions, and similar fraudulent attempts to persuade a public, only, alas, too willing to be deluded by such insolent stratagems, that an example of what, in these days, passes for the coachbuilder's art possesses aerodynamic qualities which, in fact, it only too patently lacks, we must determine, first, what, if any, amount of ornamentation is acceptable on its own

account. And here I find it necessary to remind the engineer who meanly, and, as I think, dishonestly, shelters behind a superstition that the general are content with the appearance of a motor only if it be plentifully

## APHORISM 1

Chromium-plated ornaments as intolerable barbarism

bedaubed with imbecile medallions of chromium-plated metal, that, had he, or his, idiotically-termed, stylist, not, in the first place, rendered such a belief possible by defiling the market with automobiles so smirched, the fashion could not, of itself, have come into being. Chromium-plate, at best a sorry substitute for the precious metals created by Divine Providence for use where a bright surface is desired, may permissibly be employed upon features where an application of paint would, for one reason or another, be inappropriate, as on bumpers, the handles of doors, and such like; but to trammel a fine honest area of gleaming cellulose varnish with chromium panels and beadings that serve no function but the gratification of vanity is the action of a man utterly innocent of the elements of good breeding.

II. One exception only may be permitted, and that is to be found where the lines of the coachwork are so conceived that the painted surface obtrudes into space in such fashion as to cause the risk of contact with a similar surface. Here, *and here only*, a chromium-plated rib may be affixed to serve the office of what is known to seamen as a 'rubbing-strake.' A splendid example may be inspected upon the Chevrolac 'Pathmaster,' where the burnished metal member is led with wonderful exactness along the line of greatest vulnerability, beginning with admirable abruptness at the very point where contact is first possible, and ending with equal determination where the danger exists no longer.

But has the engineer been content with this excellent, and honest, piece of design? Not so; for finding, no doubt, a surplus of chromium strip upon his books, he has set to twisting it into all kinds of fanciful slogans and mottoes, such as 'Silkdrive,' 'Powerstat,' and the like, and these he has scrawled at various points upon his coachwork with all the art of the Bill-poster. What might, therefore, have been an exemplary design has been debased to the mark of the child's autograph-album.

III. Cognate with this question of chromium-plate is the matter of white-walled tyres and similar coxcombs. God in His Infinite Wisdom ordained that vulcanized rubber should present to the viewer a uniform surface of warm grey. For what exact purpose I find it difficult to surmise, the arbiters of contemporary style have decreed that the rubber of motor-tyres should be so treated that the walls (but not the treads) shall show a gleaming white

as unsightly as it is impractical. Now a decision so ludicrously inept might perhaps be overlooked as a solitary vagary, were it not that other conceits, equally fantastical, are beginning to manifest themselves; and so

## APHORISM 2

Wheels are intended to convey engine-power to the road

wire-spoked wheels, constructed upon the soundest engineering principles, are concealed behind pressed-steel discs devised according to no principles that I can discover; and pressed-steel wheels of capable and economical construction are defiled with a machine that serves no other evident purpose than to delude the ignorant into the belief that the wheels are of the wire-spoked variety. I cannot too strongly emphasize that the function of wheels in a motor-car is to enable the vehicle to run smoothly and travel safely, and that, so long as they are of a justly circular outline, the maltreatment or perversion of them to effect nuances of appearance that are foreign to the engineer's primal purpose is barbarous and dishonest.

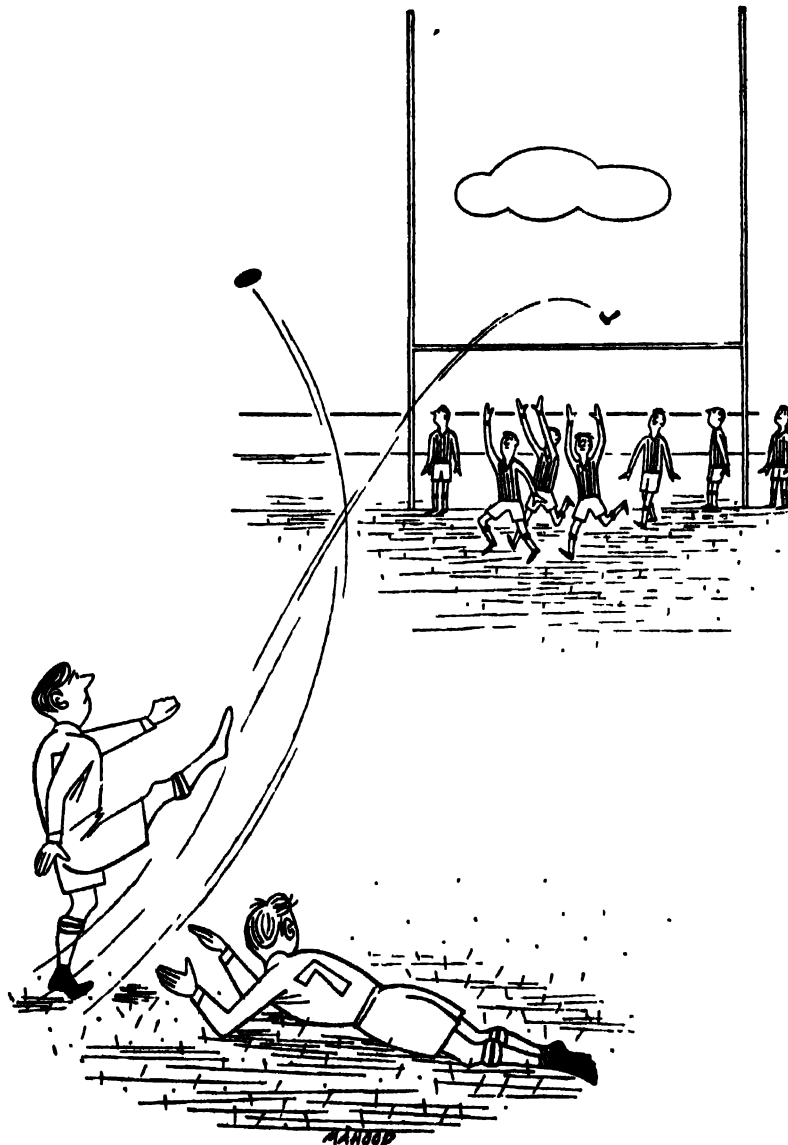
IV. I cannot allow myself to conclude these remarks without some reference to a problem of especial importance in these times.<sup>1</sup> Neither by the public, nor by those

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xi, 17.

charged with its execution, is the word 'repair' understood. It means the complete dismantling of the fabric of the vehicle: a dispersal so entire that but few of the components can hope to be returned to their original state: an explosive disruption in which tools, upholstery, paintwork, as well as the machinery itself, suffer in proportion as they are allowed to be handled by the vulgar and insensitive mechanicians engaged. Let us speak bold and say that there is no such thing as a repair. For as

fast as one matter has been attended to, another has been discovered—or created; and this process, for which a monetary charge is made *by the hour*, can be so prolonged, in the hands of practised workmen, that it were better for the motorist who detects trouble in the machinery of his vehicle sternly to condemn the vehicle to the scrap-heap, rather than entrust it to the hands of those who falsely undertake to set it aright.

B. A. YOUNG



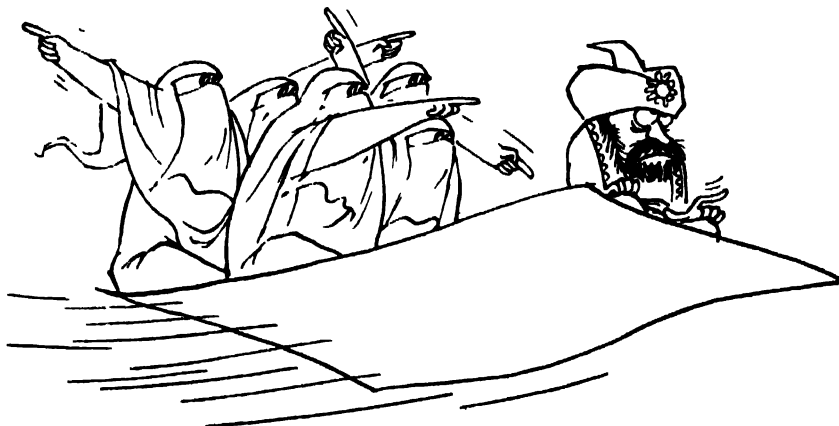
# If Your Lordship Pleases

HER MAJESTY'S Judges are, as everyone knows, a race completely apart. Knocking up some eight thousand a year, with a pension of around five thousand, they may seem to the uninformed layman to occupy a somewhat enviable position. In fact, as they are the first to point out, their lot is very hard, they work from 10.30 until 4 p.m. for at least nine months in every year, they pay as they earn and often have to travel on the Tube. As an occupational risk they have to avoid being found drunk in charge of motor-cars or on enclosed premises after dark. For the advocate, the conduct of most cases would be far easier without them. However, as they are there, some sort of approach to them has to be worked out.

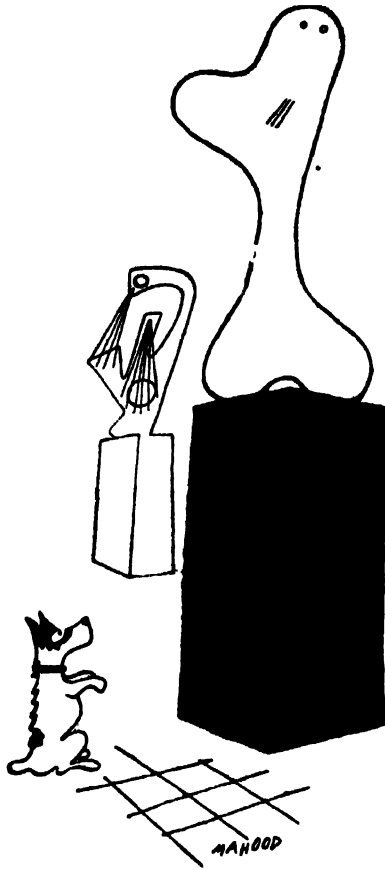
Judges can be divided into various categories. There are the plain ghastly, nowadays a dying race, who are rumoured to order double helpings of muffins after death sentences. There are the scholarly, who are inclined to make Greek epigrams at witness in factory accident cases, to the complete bewilderment of everyone in Court except one aged solicitor who laughs alone and far too loud. There are bluff, hearty Judges who grow restive after lunch time on Fridays, and there are kindly, courteous Judges who are polite to everyone. Of these the ghastly are often the most just, the scholarly the most obtuse, the hearty the least reliable and the courteous the most difficult to deal with.

The advocate is expected to contend with all these types, and what everyone secretly hopes is that he will have a row with them. As he is also expected to win his cases he will rarely do so, but it is true that nothing enhances a barrister's reputation so much as a good row with a Judge. Everyone remembers F. E. Smith because when a Judge said to him 'What do you think I am here for?' he replied 'Who am I to question the inscrutable ways of Providence?' No one remembers his opponent, who probably took advantage of this regrettable crack to win the case. However, at the slightest sign of truculence at the Bar, at even the smallest edge put to the remark 'By now that point should be clear *even* to your Lordship,' ancient solicitors' managing clerks quiver like young girls at bull fights and the ushers are delightedly reminded of the alleged days of Sir Edward Marshall Hall.

On the whole, if you have your client's interests at heart, it is best to deny the onlookers this pleasure and be polite to the Judge. This consists of telling him how you are much obliged to him and asking if he pleases at various intervals and laughing uproariously at his invariably aimless jokes. The point of a Judge's joke is, of course, not that it should be funny but that it should be there at all. When a Judge leans back with the sad expression of one about to embark on a joke the barristers look nervously



David Lloyd.



at each other in case they should overlook the moment at which they are meant to laugh. There are two sorts of Judges' jokes, the sort that are designed to show his childlike innocence in face of the complexities of modern life, and the sort which start off 'I remember when the late Theo Matthew . . .' Of the two, the second is preferable as having a period charm.

Loud laughter at judicial sallies is desirable and will keep your exchanges with the Judge on a reasonable level of politeness. If he then wants to say something rude and quite unhelpful to you he will at least begin 'It might assist you to know what is passing through my mind,' and you can begin your only slightly offended reply: 'With the very greatest respect . . .' If he continues to let you know what is passing through his mind, another telling gambit is to ask him a quite irrelevant question and, just as he opens his mouth to answer it, say, in a loud voice, 'I ask the question, of course, purely rhetorically, my

Lord,' thereby making the most astute Judge gasp for air. The golden rule, however, with any Judge, is to keep your eye firmly on the clock. As soon as the hands reach ten minutes to one it is time to say, even if you are in the middle of a sentence, 'I am now passing to another topic. Would your Lordship find that a convenient moment to adjourn?' The look of surprised delight in those hungry eyes is worth another witness. With all Judges it is the hour before lunch that is the most tricky.

By and large, Judges have improved, and many of them are now mild-mannered men with television sets and houses at Purley. They are no longer scarlet-and-ermine ogres tortured by gout or fired by claret, from whose courts impressionable junior barristers would totter green and trembling. They deserve, therefore, and usually get, kindly treatment. Exceptional cases occur. A long while ago someone threw a dead cat at a harmless County Court Judge. After dodging neatly, he uttered the most severe rebuke of which he seemed capable: 'I warn you,' he said, 'should you do that again, the consequences may be extremely serious.'

But these are peaceful days in the forensic arena. It is not really necessary to come to Court armed with dead cats. It is sufficient to say, with whatever expression of anger, despair, disgust or plain bewilderment you care to put into it, 'If your Lordship pleases . . .'

GEOFFREY LINCOLN



# Some Everyday PLEASURES and PAINS



PENING a parcel—untying the string  
Nearing a little hill-top  
Buying old books and not reading them  
Starting Proust, Gibbon, Don Quixote—any  
of the great unfinishables  
Switching off the wireless

Boring those we dialike  
Driving along by-passes at night—circling the ghostly  
roundabout—waiting at traffic lights  
Taking one's tie, one's shoes off  
Barrel-organ in the rain—how it totters on bandaged feet  
through an old dance, missing most of the steps  
Swimming-bath voices  
Seeing oneself in shop-windows  
Fitting the last piece into a jigsaw and stepping back  
Drawing corks—loosening a metal top under the hot tap  
Trains in the night  
Antics of a music-hall singer seen from the sidelong bar that  
excludes sound  
Cry of a newspaperman in the dusk  
New packs of notes at the bank, crisply told  
Dabbling fingers in a stream  
Snow round a street lamp, or descending into water  
From a Tube carriage, seeing the doors shut against a portly  
late-comer  
Looking into a dark garage from a sunny street  
Plucking the leaves from leaf-artichokes, squeezing shrimps  
out of shells, pulling the stalk out of a succulent pear  
Yawning under the sky  
Newspaper left behind—handling it gingerly, especially if  
others are looking  
Someone *daring* a bus to run over him  
A horse funeral  
Reading in a hot bath, with the electric lamp like a moon  
through mist  
Passing people at a bus stop over which has been pasted a  
notice announcing a temporary stop elsewhere  
Tight little parcel with finger-loop—reck of freshly ground  
coffee  
Tramp feathered like a field marshal, stretching in the sun,  
scratching, producing half a loaf and a knife  
Hearing a fire-engine, turning, and pretending to be dis-  
mayed  
A raindrop on a window gathering, running down, swelling  
another, breaking  
Dripping sealing-wax on the reversed envelope  
Exploring on a hot summer night the cool overlap of sheet  
Jogging along in a train—puff-puff, preferably uphill—past  
astonished pigs

Making one's pains pleasures



LIFTING the big coffee-pot they have forgotten  
to fill  
Dogged all day by the Light Programme  
Sung at by musicians, snapped by photo-  
graphers, accosted by the flag-day flirt—one  
points to one's button-hole, it's empty  
Walking down the moving stairs that have stopped moving  
Hearing about one's double  
The car with the four-note horn  
A moth brushing the cheek just as one is about to fall  
asleep  
Buying a stamp and hopelessly overlicking it  
Hearing one's Christian name called—one resists—again—  
one turns—quite a lot of people staring, all strangers, and who-  
ever shouted is silent  
Hotel room where the basin gurgles sympathetically to all  
the other basins  
Seeing one's selves at the tailor's  
Sudden subsidence—trouser button gone: how many left?  
Flicking cigarette-ash into the ink  
Saying hullo to someone you don't know in the lift, having  
yesterday failed to say hullo to someone you did  
Smiling good-bye, walking briskly round the corner, to  
bump into the very person you have quitted, who has taken  
another way  
Broken romance, when the girl in front looks round  
Revolving doors, always with a slow-coach ahead and a  
tornado behind  
Treading on a snail  
The not quite empty match-box—one dead-head  
Outside the telephone boxes where everyone devotes his  
lunch-hour to a girl or a bookie  
Posting a letter, and remembering as it plops that this letter  
was on no account to be posted  
Waking early, having dreamt that the telephone bell's  
ringing  
A horse drooping over his fallen nosebag  
Sixpence rolling through a grating  
Removing the hundreds of skin particles, one by one, from  
a cup of coffee  
Snip, snip round that baldness receding to eternity at the  
barber's  
Heat wave, and how everyone warms seats for everyone else  
The passenger in the Tube who stops staring only so long  
as you stare back  
Spoonng a spider out of the front door with a newspaper;  
at once he is blown back  
At a party, coming on a small tumbler of gin, and sur-  
reptitiously drinking it off, to find it's water

and

making one's pleasures pains.

G. W. STONIER



*'Father says will you look out of the window a moment, as he's about to defy gravity.'*



## Looking for Trouble

**LOUIS XVII** (Louis-Charles DE FRANCE, dit), second fils de Louis XVI et de Marie-Antoinette, né à Versailles en 1785. Enfermé au Temple, il fut, après l'exécution de son père, proclamé roi de France par les princes émigrés . . . Certains auteurs prétendent qu'on le fit évader, et qu'on lui substitua un enfant malade. A la faveur de cette opinion, certains intrigants, dont les plus connus sont Naundorff et Mathurin Bruneau, cherchèrent, depuis la chute de Napoléon I<sup>er</sup>, à se faire passer pour le dauphin.

*Nouveau Petit Larousse*

THE trouble with Monsieur Naundorff is calling himself René de Bourbon. He is selling wine and is very red in the face. Nobody objects to this, but Monsieur Naundorff sitting behind his four or six lawyers wants to prove that he is the direct descendant of Louis XVII, that he is the real male-branch pretendant to the throne of France.

The PALAIS DE JUSTICE is a huge place, with huge

corridors. Ceilings so high that you must lay on your back and shield your eyes to see them. Sort of a ballet is going on. Groups of two three or five people with an avocat-lawyer in black toga with white tie dancing for them. Some of them are women.

The Naundorff centre Bourbons affair is at the Première Cour d'Appel. On the left Bâtonnier Chresteil, his son and a few more Avocats are speaking for Naundorff. Red faced Monsieur Naundorff looking very Bourbonic and self-conscious is sitting behind them. A young boy of twelve fair-haired next to him is I suppose the Dauphin.

On the right the Avocats of the Bourbons. Staring: Maître Maurice Garçon de l'Académie Française. He is not defending to-day. He is listening. He has written a book proving that Louis Dix-sept actually died in Temple-Prison. Behind their Avocats are sitting the Bourbon-Parme-Family-People. They are looking almost as Bourbonic as Monsieur Naundorff.

Reports of National Archives, statements of Com-



missaires of the République, Barbers, Widows of gravediggers.

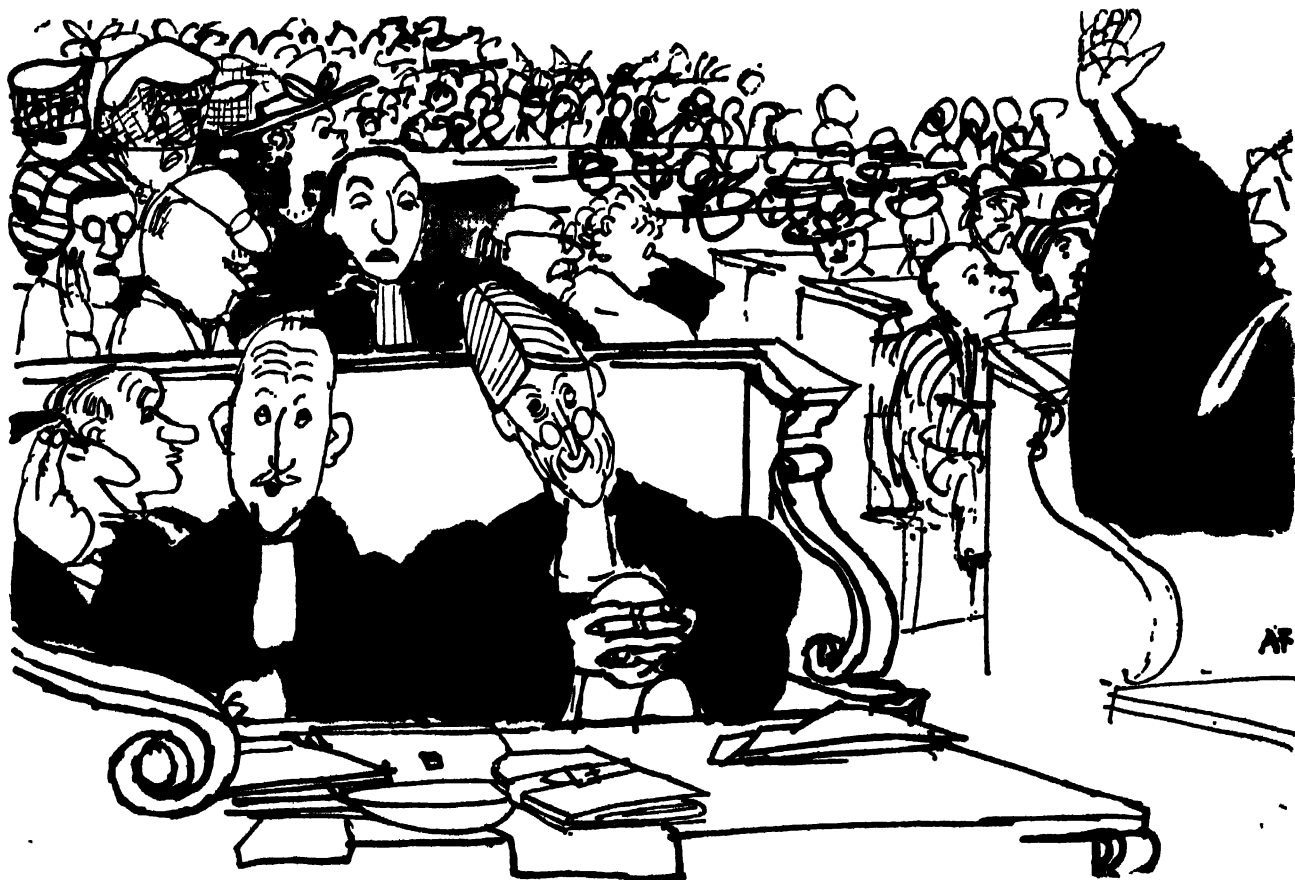
They say: Ten years old Dauphin is bright and gay. So gay as to sing LA CARMAGNOLE, and other revolutionary songs. Commissaire of the République states: Louis XVII doesn't sing. Answers no questions. Even when offered sweets or toys.

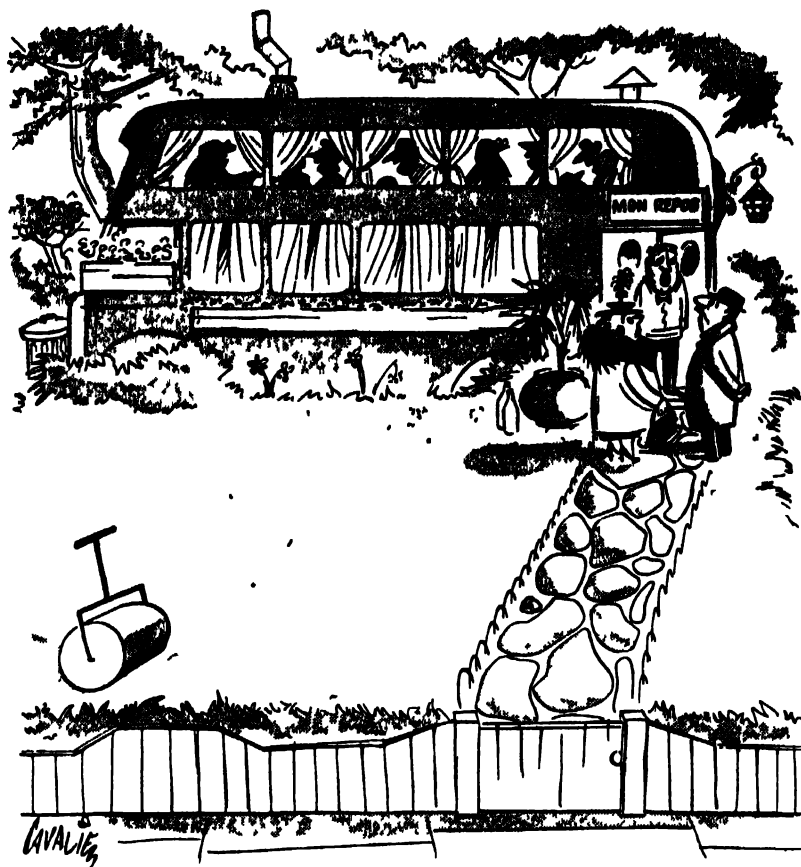
Docteur Pipelet who examined the Dauphin in the past, is replaced by Dr. Pe'letan, who did not know him before. So that if the 'real' Dauphin was replaced by an ill child he could not notice. Docteur Pelletan states: the child he examined was scrofulous, rachitic and rather degenerated. The Bourbon-Parme do not seem to object to this. Dr. Pelletan sawed off the top of the skull of the 'pretended' Dauphin when dead. Unburied as late as 1846, taken

out of a lead coffin, bones were missing but there was one more thumb-bone than usually requested. Top of the skull sawn off all right. Doctors estimate the skeleton being that of a boy of fourteen. Unburied again in 1894. Doctors estimate: parts of the bones being those of a boy of fourteen, parts of a boy of eighteen.

Four Judges and their important Président, dozens of Avocats are sitting and listening. Ladies with very elegant hats are gasping. Monsieur Naundorff has a severe expression, Maître Maurice Garçon has sardonic smiles, at the moment he is acting sceptic and listening, I am afraid Monsieur Naundorff is looking for trouble.

ANDRÉ FRANÇOIS





*'I'd like to ask you in, but we're already five standing.'*

## A Time for Compromise

THE thing boiled up very rapidly. It was on Monday, February 14, that *The Times* revealed that disagreement had arisen between the B.B.C. and the British Transport Commission about a plan to 'use actors to portray complaining railway passengers in a projected television programme.' 'All we objected to,' the Transport Commission's spokesman had said, 'was that the B.B.C. wanted to put actors on the train, then take a film of them complaining about different things.'

By February 17 Sir Gerald Barry, in his capacity as editorial adviser to the TV programme concerned, had declared war in *The Times* Correspondence

Columns with the phrase 'an important issue of principle.' He also spoke of democratic duty, vigilance, freedom of expression, and the need to ensure that 'such an attempt at interference as we have just seen manifested by British Railways should not go unchallenged.' These were fighting words.

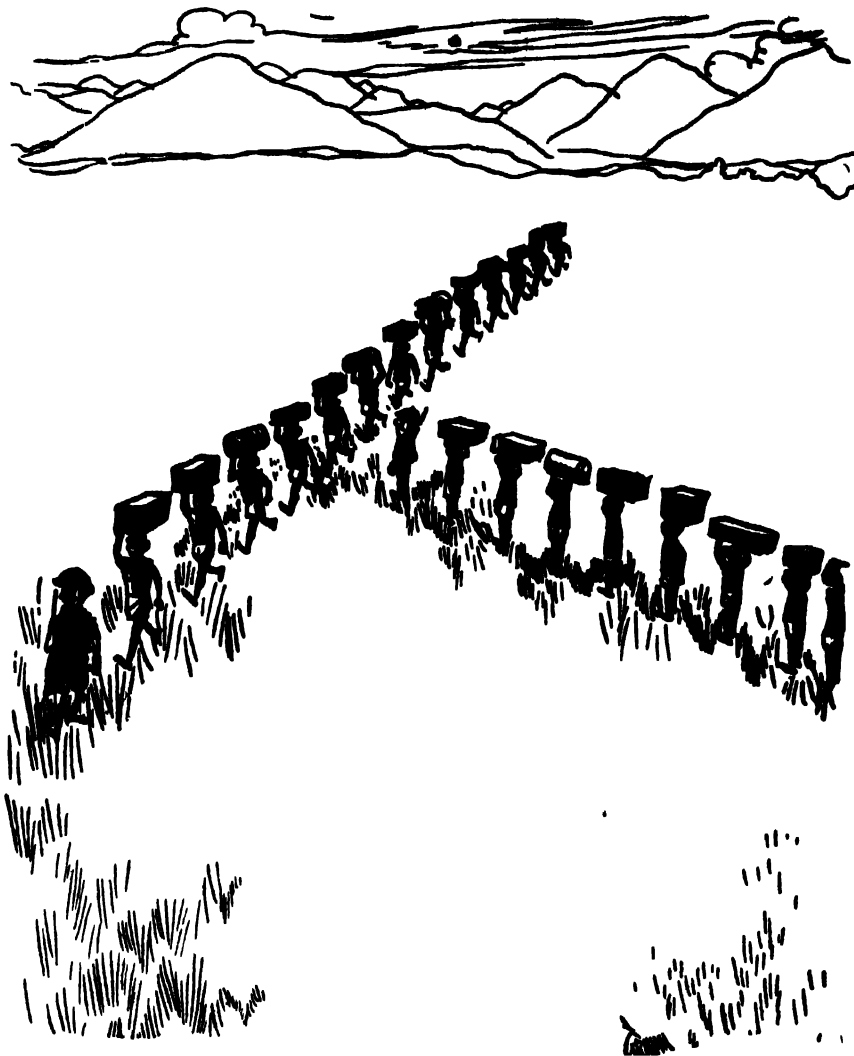
On February 18 a Mr. J. B. Birks wrote of 'licence rather than freedom' and scored heavily by being the first to use the word 'monstrous.'

It was time for the P.R.O.s to come down into the lists. On the 19th Mr. J. H. Brebner, on behalf of the Transport Commission, roundly declared that 'British Railways owe it to themselves to oppose mis-

representation'; and he pointed out that 'the use of actors who would mix with bona fide passengers and utter scripted complaints would obviously lead the public to believe that the complaints were factual.' On the 22nd Mr. Douglas Ritchie, Head of Publicity at the B.B.C., took up the gauntlet thus boldly thrown down. 'I am sure Mr. Brebner will forgive me for pointing out that he must have been misinformed,' he thundered; and he followed up this home thrust with the astonishing statement that, at the conference between the B.B.C. and the Commission

to arrange the details of the programme, the use of actors 'was not even discussed.' Mr. Brebner replied on the 23rd with some damaging quotes from the B.B.C. script, in which the detestable word 'actor' several times occurred.

The final upshot of this titanic clash of P.R.O.s is not, at the time of writing, known. What does emerge, however, is that there has been a palpable lack of statesmanship in the handling of this not very complicated affair. The B.B.C. desired, in the interests of realism, that their railway programme



should contain references to dirt, dust, cold, stale sandwiches, late trains, and, if time permitted, Liverpool Street Station. The Transport Commission felt that, in the interests of fair play, their point of view should be put forward. Very well then. The wishes of the two sides are not irreconcilable. Surely there is a case here for compromise—e.g. by using B.B.C. actors speaking a script approved, if not actually written, by the Transport Commission. Would not something on the following lines satisfy both parties?

**SCENE:** *a terminus. The door of a third-class compartment bursts open and sixteen B.B.C. actors tumble out on the platform.*

**INTERVIEWER:** Would anyone care to say a few words about British Railways?

**FIRST ACTOR** (*glancing at his watch as he struggles to his feet*): We have had an excellent run. Only eleven minutes late, which in view of the many difficulties with which the railways have to contend—

**SECOND ACTOR:** Exactly. It is a miracle to me how they manage it, with the indifferent fuel allocated to them. (*Taking a piece of coal out of his eye*): Just look at this sample. Practically all slate.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what about you? No, not the

lady with blood running down her face. You, sir, with the cobwebs on your hat. Did you find the compartment clean and well heated?

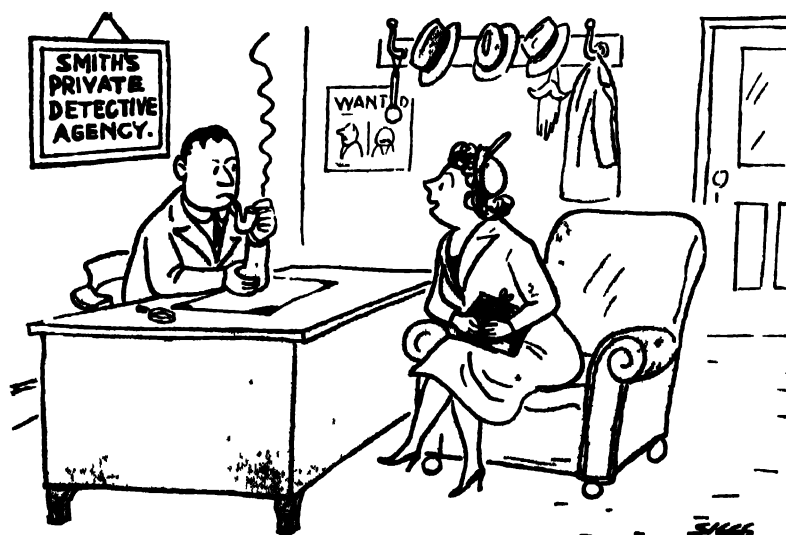
**THIRD ACTOR:** Clean! My dear, sir, you could have eaten your sandwiches off the floor. In fact, owing to the well-deserved popularity of this service, that is exactly what I did. As to the heating arrangements, an occasional breakdown in the circulatory system is unavoidable. But I happen to know that British Railways are leaving no stone unturned—

**A VOICE:** There was a rat under my seat which had plainly died of cold. I—

**INTERVIEWER:** One at a time, please. Now, madam, perhaps you will give us the woman's point of view?

**ACTRESS:** Speaking as a housewife, I know how difficult it is to keep upholstery and curtainings fresh and dainty. It is all very well for men to complain, but if they will put their dirty boots on the seats what can British Railways do? In my opinion we lead the world, and I am not ashamed to say so.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you. I am sure that many housewives will endorse what that lady has just said. Now, about stations. I wonder if somebody—perhaps the gentleman over there in the fur boots and Balaclava would care to say a few words.



*'I want to employ someone to find out if my husband is having me watched.'*



Andrew F. Turner

FOURTH ACTOR: I know that allegations of dirt, decay, darkness, chipped teacups and mismanagement have from time to time been brought against the railway stations of this country. It is necessary to preserve a sense of proportion. The mere fact that many of our stations have remained unaltered for upwards of a hundred years proves that our railway pioneers builded better than they knew. None the less, British Railways are constantly alert to the possibilities of improvement. Only recently, porters' barrows at a number of main-line termini have been painted green, and now, one hears, there is a scheme on foot to lower the openings in the protective screens at booking-offices to mouth level. Unresting, and, if I may say so without blasphemy, unhasting—

A VOICE: I queued for an hour and a quarter—

FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH and EIGHTH ACTORS (loudly): What about a move to the buffet, chaps, for a cup of hot, strong coffee?

THE REST: A scrumptious plan! They say the teaspoons have been unchained, and lighting is by gas throughout.

*All shuffle off towards barrier. Cut to buffet, showing sixteen actors in queue. They rub their hands eagerly, while a comely barmaid wipes beer-stains off packets of cigarettes.*

ACTOR AT HEAD OF QUEUE: Now boys, who's for a sandwich? Every bit of food here is untouched by human hands, you know.

A VOICE: It can remain so, as far as I am concerned.

INTERVIEWER: Who said that? We cannot have these constant interruptions.

CHORUS OF ACTORS: Some unscripted blackleg, if you ask us.

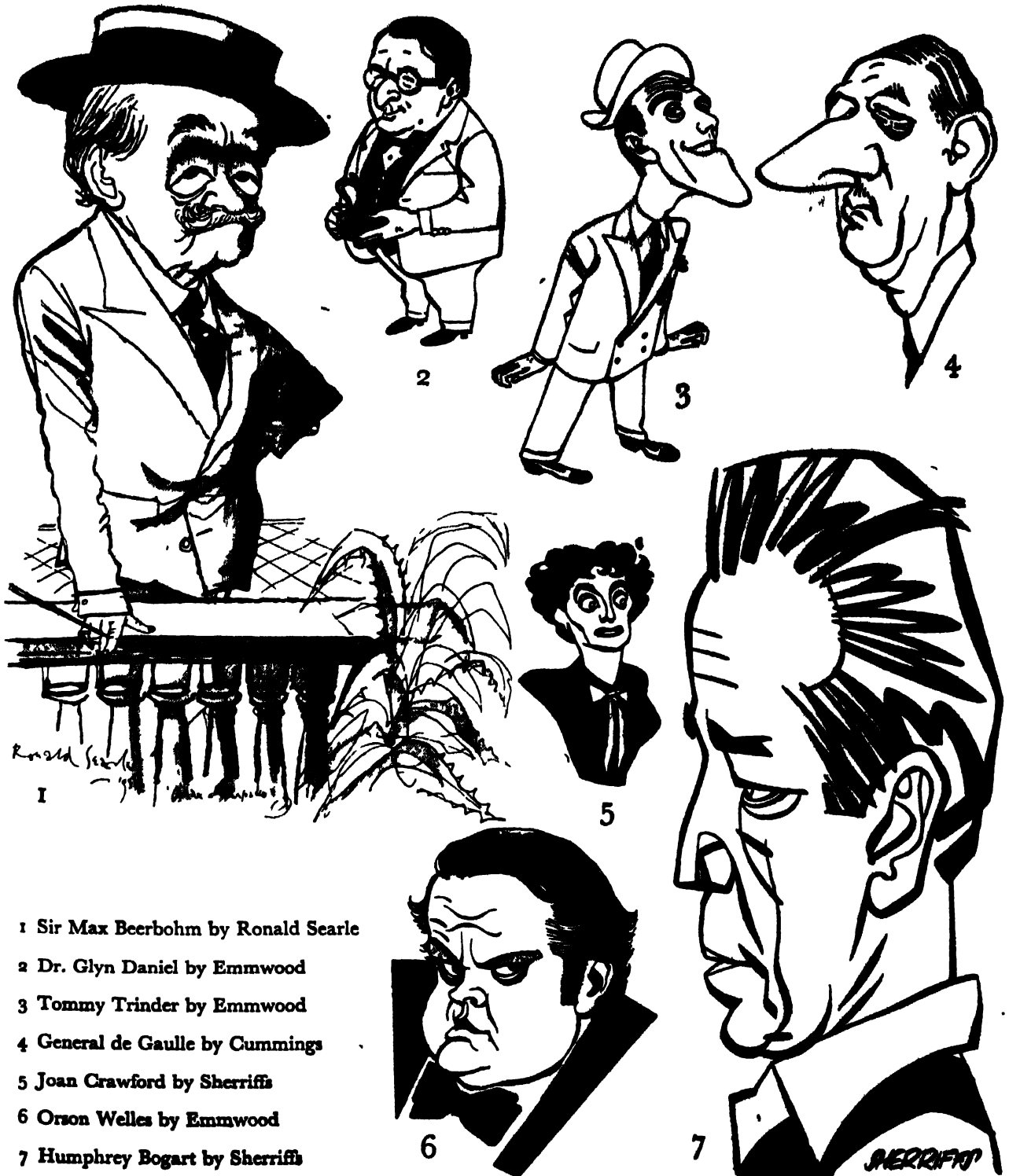
INTERVIEWER: After him then, boys! Kill him! It's my belief the man's a bona fide passenger.

*Chase. Wheels revolving. Connecting-rods going up and down. Hitchcock touches. Imaginative use of signal gantries, communication cords, comic old porters, etc. Finally, clouds of steam from British Railways standard mixed passenger traffic 2-cylinder 4-6-2 'Britannia' class locomotive dissolve to reveal close-up of Mr. Brebner saying a few words about fair play.*

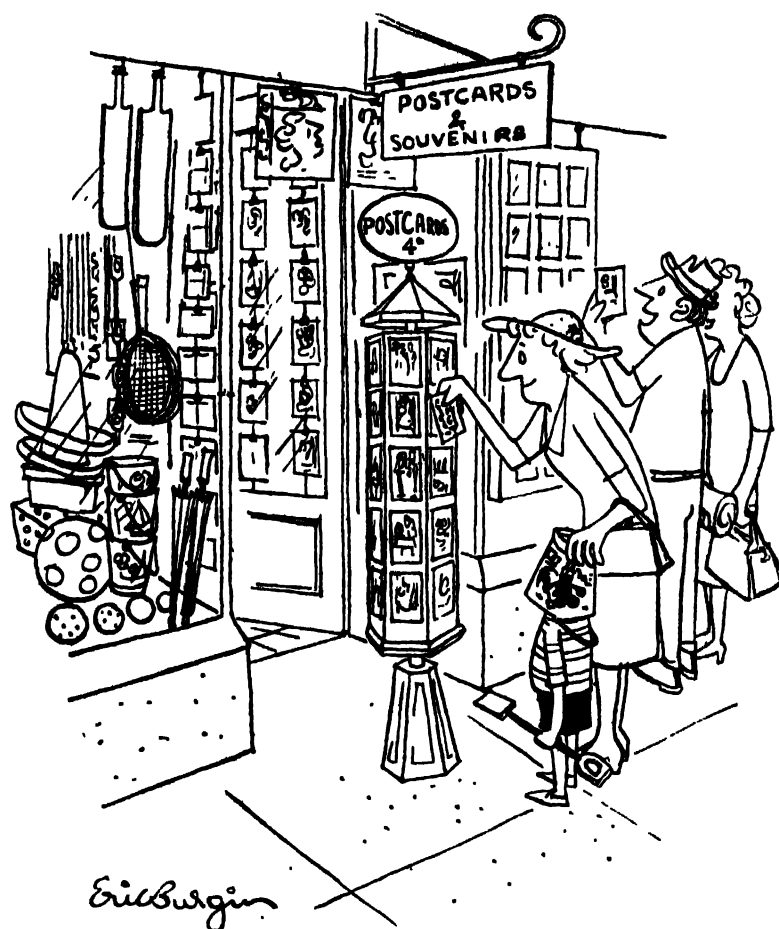
H. F. ELLIS



... like two artificial gods,  
 Have with our needles created both one flower,  
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,  
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key,  
 As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,  
 Had been incorporate. So we grew together,  
 Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
 But yet an union in partition;  
 Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;  
 So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;  
 Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,  
 Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream, 3, ii*



- 1 Sir Max Beerbohm by Ronald Searle
- 2 Dr. Glyn Daniel by Emmwood
- 3 Tommy Trinder by Emmwood
- 4 General de Gaulle by Cummings
- 5 Joan Crawford by Sherriffs
- 6 Orson Welles by Emmwood
- 7 Humphrey Bogart by Sherriffs



## Of All the Saints

WE ALL stood up as Mr. Rawlins burst into the prefects' room for his weekly laying on of inspiration. His eyes were gleaming as if, for the first time in all his twenty-five years of teaching, he had found the one formula that could put an end to the inertia of the young. When we sat down again there were among us backs straight as pokers that were normally slumped over in a self-protective arch. 'Get those windows open,' said Mr. Rawlins, and a covey of congenital janitors rushed from the front row to start pulling at half a dozen defective cords that had been trained by us to defeat freshness. 'Whenever I

come in here there is a whiff of nicotine and moral decline. It never fails to take part of the shine from most of the ideals that actuated my fingers when I held them out to take my diploma.'

Mr. Rawlins shouted at the cord-pullers and they were scared into genius. The windows purred open and the fumes of weariness thinned. We leaned forward, almost as alert as Mr. Rawlins.

He raised his arm, the impressive sleeve of his gown hanging away from it. He held it there for several seconds and we could see the black cave filling up with the items of his agenda.



'As you know, we propose to hold the school cisteddfod once again this year, and we hope to make it the best since the war. I propose to deal briefly with some of the flaws that I have perceived in the organization during the last few years. There will always be flaws. I mention that for the benefit of those of you who flaunt the toga of cynicism or idealism even before you have shed the short breeches of pubescence. Life, I cannot say it too often, is simply the detection and mitigation of flaws.'

'Yes, sir,' said Leo Warburton, who always said that when he thought that Mr. Rawlins had come out with an axiom of really rounded sonority.

'I am for the cisteddfod,' said Mr. Rawlins, 'although I believe that on the whole the Welsh have abused their gift of singing and harmonizing. They have shown a tendency to debauch eloquence, to encourage the lusher type of elegy and the cruder type of hymnal bawl. These tactics have blunted a good deal of their mental edge and brought on a mechanical emotionalism which has played the bear with most of their political thinking.'

'Yes, sir,' said Sammy Price, who always said that when he thought Mr. Rawlins was giving the cue for some wild argument.

'Our cisteddfod,' said Mr. Rawlins, blazing his anger at Sammy but swerving away from the controversial point, 'is in honour of a saint. Saint David, a very fine and early Christian who spread the word among your compatriots when woad and mayhem played the same rôle as rugby and chips to-day. The honouring of one saint reminds us of the essential unity of faith and that is good in a zone where any fanatic with a few strips of tin, one enrolled zealot and a way of making his phobias articulate, can put up a conventicle, each one a burial ground of dignity and a breeding place for a spurious libertarianism in matters of observance.'

'Yes, sir,' said Sammy Price, who had become a skilled sampler of the weird wines of warming belief distilled from Mynydd Coch's more harassed midnights.

'You cannot conduct religion on the lines of a "Go As You Please" concert. Once I clearly heard from on high the sound of a divine tut-tut when one of the more clownish pastors of this zone unbuttoned his waistcoat to show he was broaching the peroration. This year we hope to have the entire school assembled in the hall. We are unfortunate in not having a school hall or school chapel especially

meant for such gatherings as these. A school chapel! That would impose a new creative gravity on the less tractable of our louts. How many of you saw the film of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*? How many of you remember the splendid twilight glow surging through the stained-glass windows on to the head of Arnold?'

We all put our hands up. Some of us did not see the picture but it helps to drive Mr. Rawlins on to a new point to have us share his memory with him.

'We have a hall with a partition which is dragged back and forth at need by a squad of boys from IVc whose eyes contain as complete a promise of evil as I have ever seen. Their aim is to jolt this clumsy device off the runners and bring it down with flattening impact on forty to fifty heads. But we do the best we can. The year before I was asked to take charge and pack you in scientifically there were boys who spent a full assembly with one leg out of the window, boys who could not rise without having four other boys rise with them willy-nilly, and there were two smaller boys who were forced up the flues of that open fireplace in IIb room which is the front part



Ffolkes

'So much for the Government's White Paper on Housing.'

of the hall. You will remember that when we had all the new equipment for the Physics department we tried the experiment of having only a small group in the hall and relaying the cisteddfoed by loudspeaker to those classes who remained in their form rooms. We overdid that. We were so delighted to have these magic devices there was a mad rush by the boys to hear the affair mechanically and there was no one left in the hall to perform. We shall retain the microphone this year but competitors will be given some preliminary drill in approaching the thing with composure. Last year there would not have been a greater jerkiness if it had been the swinging head of a cobra.

'I am assigning six of you to wire-duty, that is, keeping an eye on the wires leading to the microphone. You will remember that boy Wilmot last year.

Entered for the junior boy soprano solo at a time when his physique and the anarchy of his tone should have persuaded Wilmot to stick to something in the handicraft and hobbies section. The boy was a bag of nerves. Even as Mr. Fanshawe, our music master, spent the very last moments coaching Wilmot in phases of the subtlest *sotto voce* that would fence off the onset of full baritone manhood in Wilmot for at least an hour, the boy was blind with panic. He started dragging the wires before him from the door to the stage and went head first into the audience, taking with him on this journey not only the microphone but Miss Pilkington who was announcing the marks in the still-life competition. I have never seen such a shaming sight in my life. It finished Wilmot. When he was fished up he could have sung "Asleep in the Deep" in the original key. And we have asked

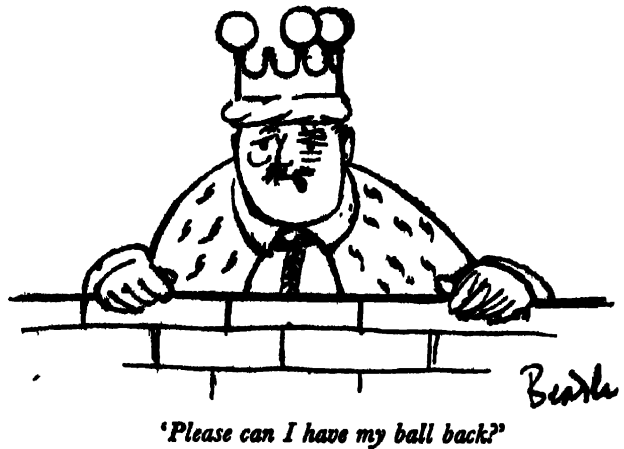


*'I can passively resist any man in the house.'*

Mr. Fanshawe to allow only entrants for that boy-soprano solo who are still sure of their vocal ground and to discourage those who have one leg already poised over the borders of boyhood.

'I have also eliminated the "Any Instruments" competition as being undignified and potentially subversive. I've never seen such a gaggle of outlaws as filed into the hall last year when this item was announced. There were those two boys, Wimpey and Wooland, incipient maniacs I'd say, who won the hobbies competition the year before with a vast collection of hamsters. They were given the prize only when they promised to switch to fretwork. They had made a metal contraption in the craft shop with two mouths. They were to blow into it and contrive a harmonized duet. Their heads were a foot apart but by the time they produced their first note, a heavy monstrous sound, their eyeballs were rubbing but with no welcome in either. Then there was Farnum of Vs, that very tall shy boy. He gave a mandolin solo. He was crouched over the instrument until no one could see it or the face of Farnum. Just a great bend of body and a faint tinkle coming from beneath. The Headmaster came in as Farnum was half-way through "Charmaine." I say it was that piece because I had seen Farnum earlier holding a copy of sheet music with that name on the cover. You would have needed to be a spaniel to gather the melody from the actual performance. I've never seen the Head look so puzzled. He asked Farnum if he were on next and Farnum's head almost came up from behind to explain that he was already in action.

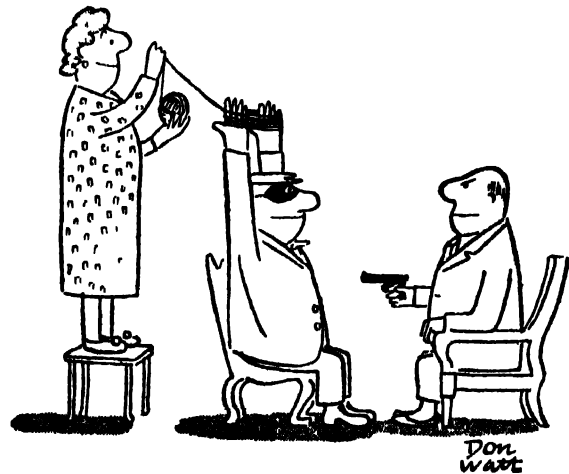
'Then there were those accordionists. Seven of them with huge instruments all playing "Down by the Old Bull and Bush." I asked them why they had picked a piece with such overtones of licence. They explained that the song had been specially arranged for them to contain a unique number of spirited *glissando* passages and that it was a favourite item of Madame Theodora, which is the name of a woman who organizes an accordion band in this area. You remember the case of Pincott? I had taken over the chair from Mr. Fanshawe and I called Pincott's name. He was there in a corner braced to play, and I will tell you that Pincott was girded with as great a total length of leather strap and weight of buckle as any working stallion. He made towards the stage. He didn't move an inch. Some helper, moved by a hatred of Pincott or that tune, had tied Pincott's straps around a radiator. Pincott is a

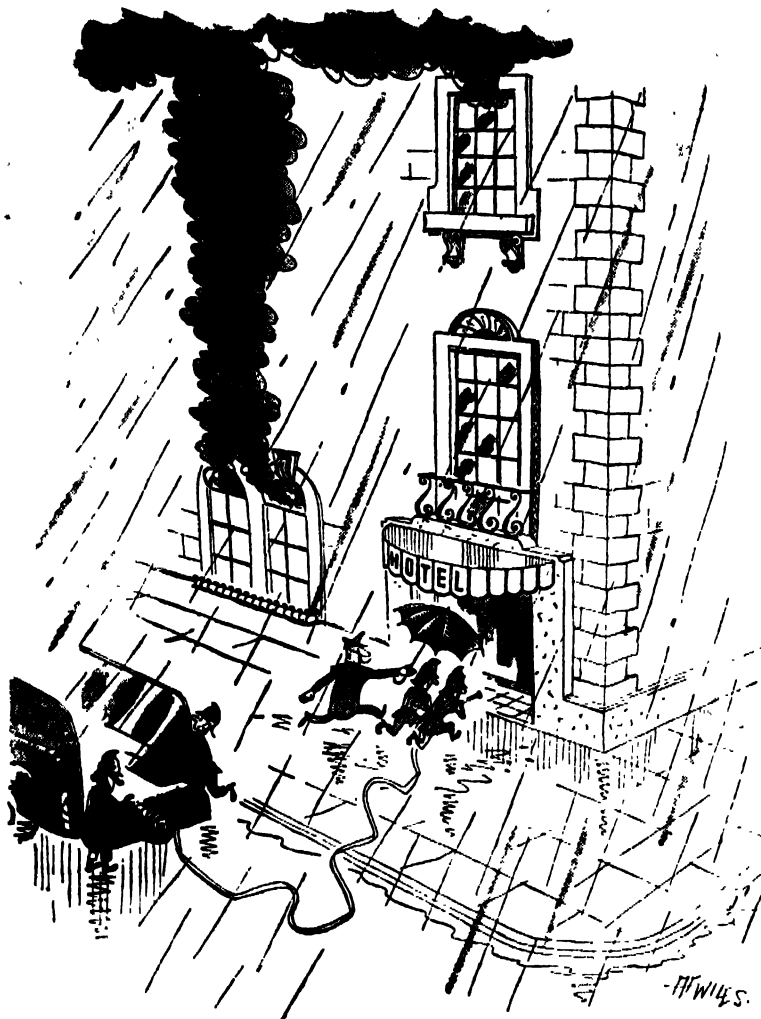


strong boy and he was in a rage to perform because that Madame Theodora had promised the first three boys in the competition a place in some small exclusive chamber group of accordionists which she intends taking on a tour of hospitals to chasten disease and madden the patients. He became so panicky when he heard my tone he almost reached the stage with the wall attached to him. You possibly recall the quip I made at the expense of Pincott. I stroked the gleaming ivories of his instrument and I said, "I suppose you get this too through the National Health." Observe my use of the satiric vein there. When the fabric of absurdity becomes too close and oppressive break the tension with a jest.'

'Yes, sir,' said Sammy Price, with the straightest face on earth.

GWYN THOMAS



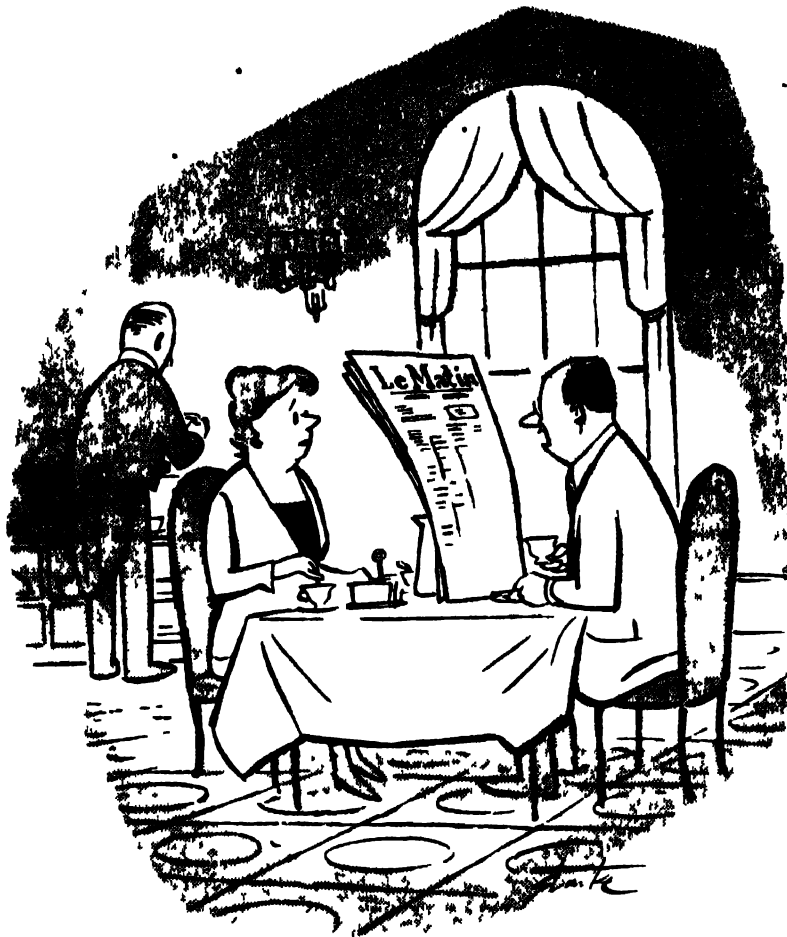


## Old Time Moujik-Hall

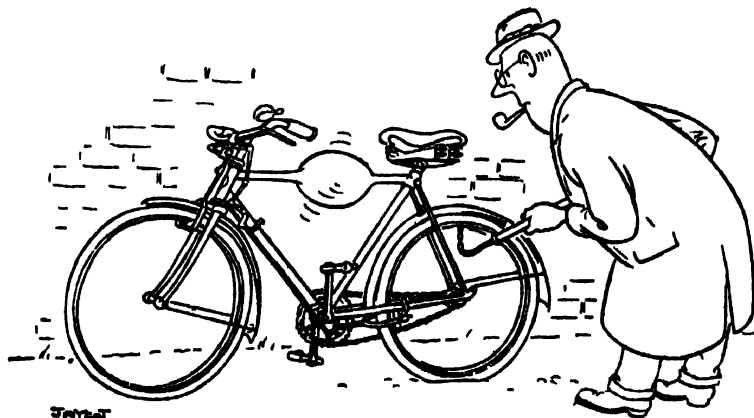
*Broadcasting from Moscow Radio on his visit to Scotland, a Soviet writer commended 'Glasgow Belongs To Me.'*

I BELONG to Moscow, dear old Moscow town,  
 I was someone who mattered in Moscow when a  
     Czar could wear a crown,  
 Now I'm all on the side of the working chap,  
 As everyone has to be,  
 But when I go on vodka and cut out the samovar  
 Moscow belongs to me.

F. L. M.



*'If ever we come to France again I really must try to learn something about the lingo.'*





## The Road to the Aisles

DEBUTANTES are an English institution. They are totally different from the French *jeunes filles* and American teenagers. The French and American girls are sophisticated and nearly women, but English buds still go through a phase of mature immaturity, shiny foreheads and powdered noses before they are off to Buckingham Palace atrociously dressed with mother. At this time of year one of the illustrated magazines usually displays a typical specimen, innocent eyed, clear skinned but of Betjemanesque proportions, wearing an unassuming white dance frock and displaying a sturdy forearm more evocative of lacrosse than a Viennese waltz.

In 1955 what can be the motives that persuade

parents to go through the expensive rigmarole of giving their daughters a season? Houses are rented in Pont Street, stores are ransacked for appropriate white tulle, and lists of young men are anxiously conned. Snobbery is still rampant, and though decently disguised the objective of coming out has invariably been to meet a suitable mate.

In France not nearly such a *brouhaha* surrounds nubile daughters. Presumably the clue is presentation at the Court of the one remaining important kingdom. An official trip to Buckingham Palace and a bob to the Queen gives point to *débutante-ism*, and indeed annually droves of foreign young ladies are presented by their ambassadors. But outside this

bastion lies a bewildering field for socially ambitious parents to roam. Drawing-room society barely exists and café society includes the riff-raff of the world, so it is strange the money and trouble that parents expend on using a daughter as a battering ram against invisible ramparts, material Don Quixotes tilting at windmills.

Indeed tuft-hunting has become a tricky assignment for the modern mother. If she aims at the peerage and the daughter possesses the right measurements she should encourage the child to become a model. This has recently proved most successful; model girls have usurped the rôle of Gaiety girls, and have far more chance of gaining a wedding ring. But marriage to a peer is not the hayride it used to be, and a stately home may well mean a life sentence of museum guide and housemaid's knee.

If one abjures titles and aims for wealth it is a narrow field. No doubt cantering round the ball-

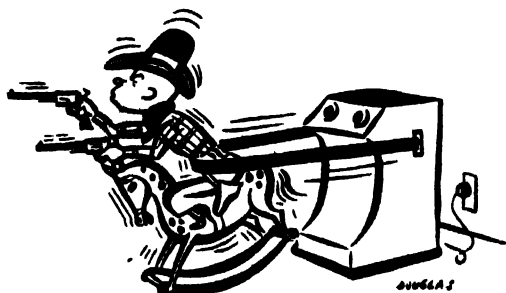
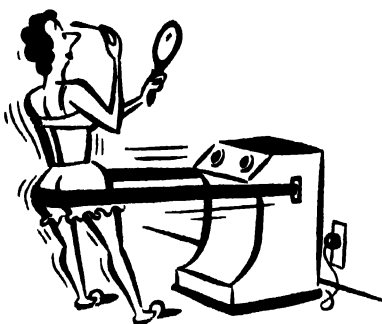
rooms there is an occasional financial genius, but how are they to be identified when young? For tycoons are apt not to appear in ballrooms until middle-aged, when they are usually spliced and are reluctant hosts to satisfy the social ambitions of their wives. True, there are usually a handful of sons of self-made men, but though their bank balances are satisfactory they are prone to inferiority complexes and are apt to be alcoholics or in the hands of psychiatrists.

Economics and emancipation, to say nothing of the ever-widening meaning of the term 'society,' have necessitated some changes in the rules of 'coming out.' It is now the fashion for vast hordes of strangely assorted mothers and daughters to meet at fork luncheons or teas to discuss the summer campaigning months, how to deploy their forces and share the spoils; girls exchange telephone numbers, mothers swop addresses of eligible men and raiding



*'How nice to see you again.'*

are organised. Second only to Buckingham Palace is Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball, held in aid of Queen Charlotte's Hospital, where it is the custom that chains of vestal virgin débutantes drag in a vast birthday cake. They are attired in white and stand in innocent groups attendant to some respected dowager who carves it up. Tickets for this beano are not cheap, but are an investment against the future and a pretty gesture to motherhood. But the anxious parent can count on it being, if slightly vulgar, a respectable function.



Other evenings may give more concern, for women are infrequently invited to dances—they drink more and it is cheaper to limit numbers. It is usual for the group of mothers escorting dinner parties to make half-hearted offers of chaperonage home. One has little faith in these promises, for girls are independent and the middle-aged become quickly tired; etiquette is no longer strict and only a hypocritical pretence is necessary. The alternative, however, is to lie imagining the various hideous fates to which the unprotected girl is liable—the least of which is rape; the worst, intoxicated young men driving fast cars: so one has no pity for the neighbours when shrill voices shattering the silent street reveal that a group of innocent young things are sharing a reliable taxicab home.

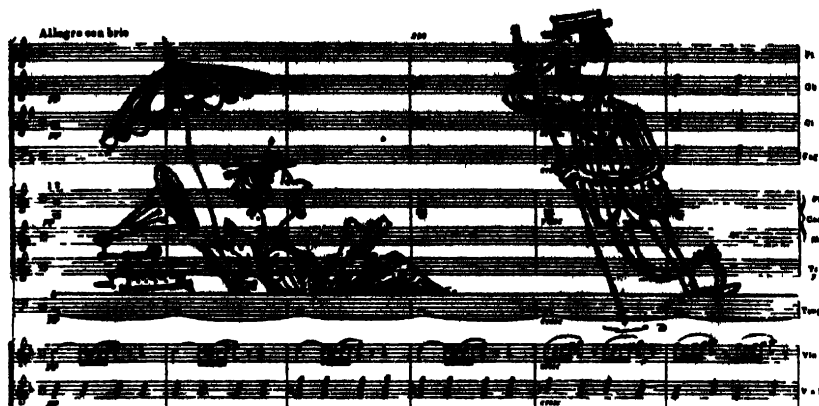
It is a forlorn hope that daughters will sleep late into the morning; they drink and smoke less and do not suffer from hangovers; they are apt to arrive in one's bedroom with the newspapers and breakfast. Their confidences are flattering, but it is difficult at that hour to disguise a passionate wish to be left alone. They are immediately aware of middle-aged morning inertia and, sensing resistance, choose that moment to request permission for dubious activities or money further to bedizen themselves. A peaceful breakfast seems a fair exchange for a pair of shoes, and given the money the daughter will catch the next bus to Oxford Street and spend a happy morning scurrying from shoe-shop to shoe-shop.

Restless nights and talkative dawns are, however, a minor menace, for in these days of elusive domestics few are found with sufficient fortitude for the summer months. The young are numerous, hungry and unpunctual; numbers for meals vary hourly; and rooms hurriedly vacated for visits to cinemas are left in hideous disarray. There is no alternative but stoicism, and when autumn arrives to be the first to place one's child as amateur saleswoman at a West End store, where she will introduce a touch of chaos, and order will be restored at home.

To-day poverty frequently delays mating, and any mother competing in the social stakes should not count on one 'season' leading to orange blossom, St. Margaret's, Westminster, policemen on horses, minor royalty and freedom from want. The sensible parent should regard the 'season' as a three-ring circus and be prepared to extend an equal welcome to a love match, a convent or a career.

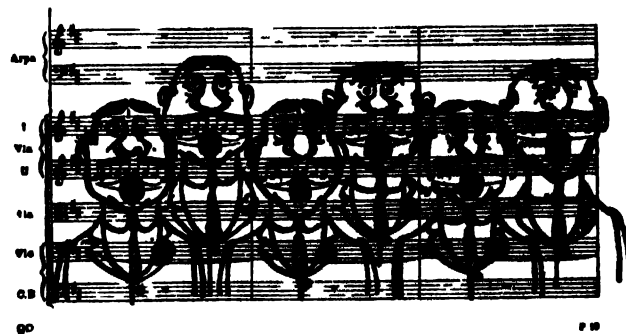
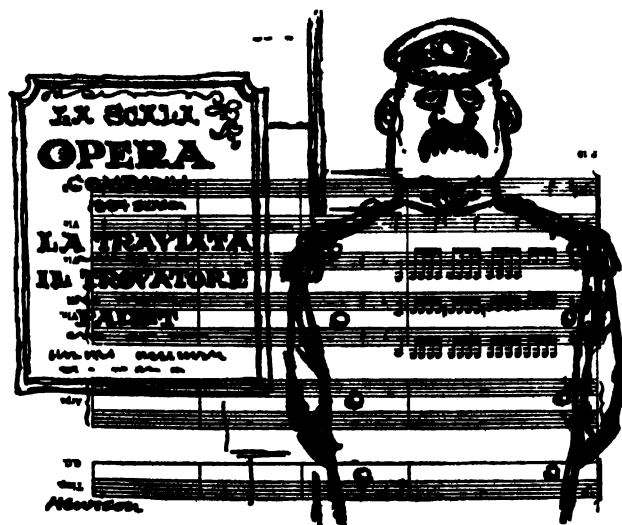
ANNE YORKE





## MUSICAL VARIATIONS

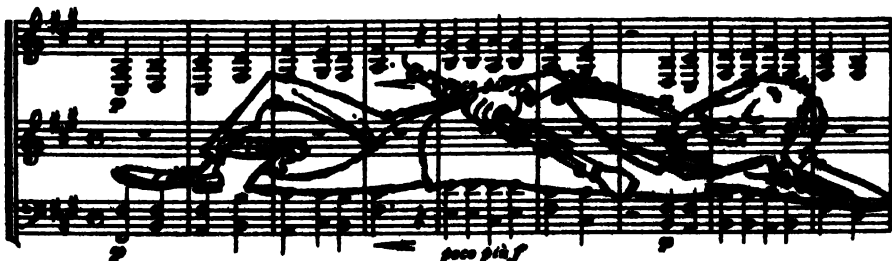
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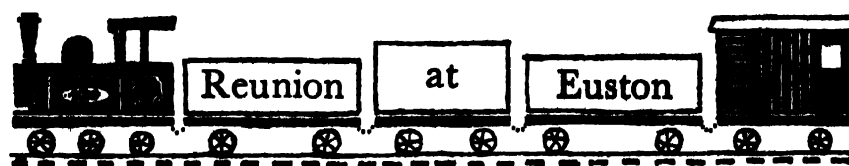


2 Clarinetti in A  
(actual sounds)

Corno inglese  
(actual sounds)

2 Fagotti





*The Society for the Reinvigoration of Unremunerative  
Branch Lines in the United Kingdom met at Fred Tallant  
Hall, Drummond Street, Euston, London, N.W.*

THE alarm goes off at a quarter to six, and I'm out  
of bed in a trice.

This is the day I've been waiting for; I don't need  
calling twice.

I get a lift in a milk cart that takes me to Plankton  
Halt—

The meeting begins at half past two, and I'm not the  
one to default.

I sit with my back to the engine, and a rug to warm  
my feet;

I've paid my extra shilling to have them reserve my  
seat.

(There's no one else on the train, of course, except for  
the guard in the van,

But they lose so much on these branch lines, I like to  
do what I can.)

We get to Snufton at 8.16, in time for the main-line  
train,

And I have some breakfast at Wugley (where you  
have to change again),

And we're in about seventy minutes late, which isn't  
so bad at all,

And then it's a sixpenny bus-ride, and hey for Fred  
Tallant Hall.

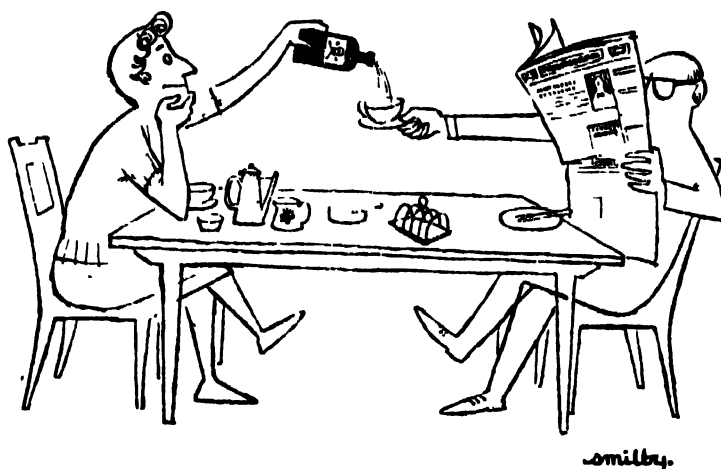
The meeting goes with a splendid swing; we talk  
about saddle-tanks

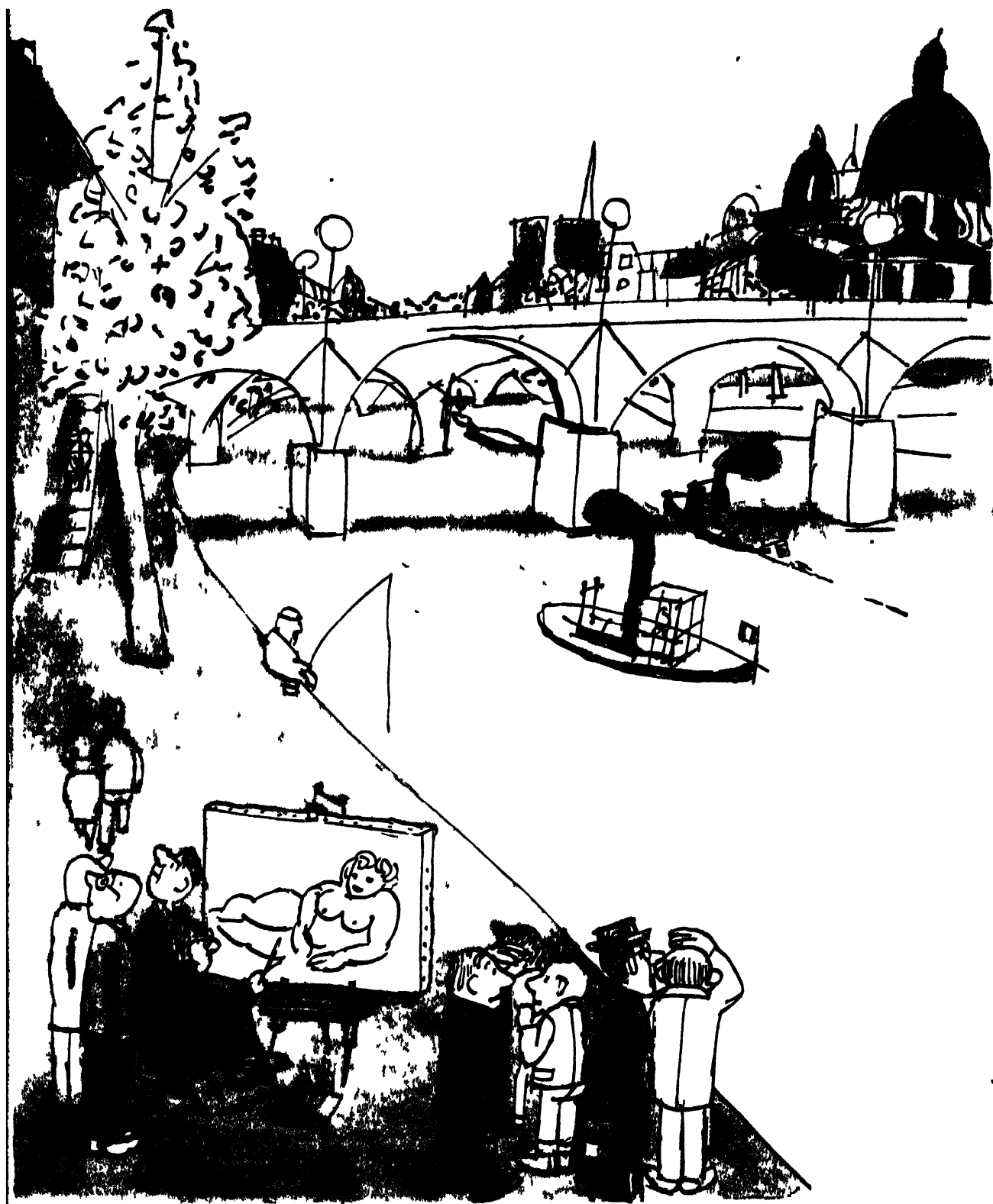
And sidings and Diesels and dining-cars, and we end  
with a vote of thanks,

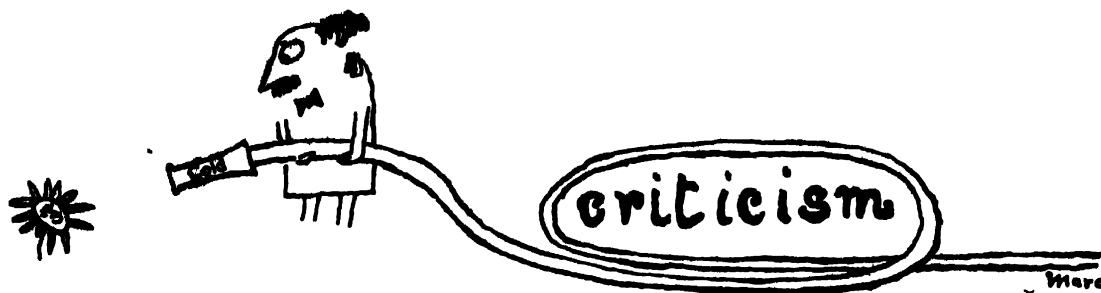
And the chairman pauses to greet us, and asks us all  
how we are,

Then blest if he doesn't shake hands all round and  
drive away in a car.

R. H. YOUNG







## Books of the Year

### Emergency Encyclopædia

#### GREAT SOVIET ENCYCLOPÆDIA: VOL. V

VOLUME V of the new *Great Soviet Encyclopædia* (1949 onwards) contains, sandwiched between a lightning pen-portrait of Ivan Solomonovich Beritashvili (founder of the Georgian School of Physiology) and a quarter-column on the explorer Robert O'Hara Burke (spelt *Berk*), some twelve hundred crisp and informative words on L. P. Beria 'Stalin's faithful pupil and closest comrade in arms.' We are able to follow Beria's career from early days in the Transcaucasian OGPU, when he was engaged in crushing with youthful vigour 'Mensheviks, Dashnaks, Musavatists, Trotskyites and other anti-Party groups.' Some twenty-five years and three and a half columns later we find him covered with glory, five Orders of Lenin, the Order of Suvorov 1st Class, two Orders of the Red Banner and seven Medals of the Soviet Union. What we do not learn, because it happened three years after the article was published, is that in 1953, accused of various crimes against the State, Beria suffered a political, and indeed a total, eclipse.

Beria's mere physical disappearance from the scene was not enough for the editors of the Soviet Encyclopædia. In a circular addressed to all subscribers they 'advise the removal from Volume 5 of pages 21 to 24, and also of the portrait stuck between pages 22 and 23.' The aforesaid pages 'should be cut out with scissors or a razor-blade, while preserving the margins near the binding.' To these margins some entirely new pages, specially supplied and numbered 21 to 24, are to be glued.

The effect of these manœuvres is to remove entirely from the Encyclopædia not only Beria himself and his photograph, but also the rising young township of Beria in the Beria district of the Armenian S.S.R., together with its silk factory, two irrigation canals, two cinemas and various other cultural amenities.

What have the editors to offer by way of replacement for the above? The following:

(a) A dreary half-page on the eighteenth century German diarist Friedrich Berkholtz (previously ignored entirely) is thrust in between the reactionary English publicist Edmund Burke and the radio-active isotope Berkelium.

(b) The article on the Bering Sea is padded out with some material, previously omitted, on early expeditions to Kamchatka.

(c) We also gain a whole page of photographs of the Bering Sea, including (i) a whaler towing two dead whales and (ii) several dead walrus on an ice-floe.

It is scarcely too much to say that this substitute material, taken as a whole, produces an almost irresistible impression of impending doom, for a parallel to which we have to search the pages of Dostoevsky. Moreover, there is something rather cold, inhuman and dead-fish-like about this whole technique of neatly removing political defaulters from the record. There must be many like myself who, without wishing to parade as *laudatores temporis acti*, hanker back to the robust and red-blooded methods of contributors to the previous *Great Soviet Encyclopædia* (begun 1926). These sturdy pioneers did

not weakly relegate Trotsky and Zinoviev to some encyclopædist limbo by the cowardly procedure of expanding to unreasonable lengths the articles on Troglodytes and Zinc, but roundly cursed them and their followers in good honest Russian as 'murderers, saboteurs, diversionaries and spies in the pay of foreign intelligence.'



It may be impossible to return to the romantic methods of the past, but in any case the handling of this Beria incident simply won't do. In fact the editors are making a big mistake if they think that we subscribers are going to sit down quietly under this sort of treatment. Quite apart from the nuisance of messing round with razor-blades and pots of glue merely for the sake of one boring diarist and a few defunct marine fauna, the point must also be made that it was only after several months' delay that the substitute material arrived at all. These people are always boasting about their Plans, but surely here, if anywhere, is a sphere where a little intelligent planning in advance could have saved a lot of trouble. It is to be hoped that in future, as each successive volume arrives (they have only got up to K so far), alternative material, of reasonable interest value and suitable for replacing articles on all characters liable to have their entries, as it were, scratched, will be sent along *at the same time*.

If this were done we should be able to react immediately, and not after a few months' delay to the sudden disgrace of, say, a high Party functionary called Klopaky. All we should need would be to hold in reserve a spare column or two containing, if

nothing better, some spicy details from the private life of the German poet Klopstock—and not, please *not*, a monochrome close-up of an expiring bug (Russian *klop*) which is about the level they are hitting at the moment with all these whales and walruses.

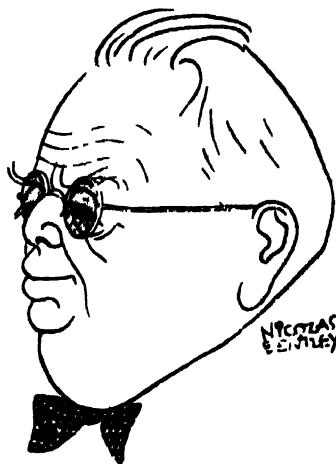
And while they are about it, why not really go to town on this substitute material? Imagine the zestful snip of the scissors or carefree swing of the razor-blade with which we would excise an article on Grabovsky (Vyacheslav Borisovich), Professor of Marxist-Leninism at Buzuluk, if only we had a colour-print of Grable, Betty to insert in its place.

In fact the more one thinks about it, the more one realizes that this substitute material represents not an issue to be evaded but a challenge to be met. What a chance for some bright young Soviet encyclopædist to make his mark! After producing a certain number of really good alternative articles he might find it possible to raise his sights, since by now there may be quite a lot of subscribers who would settle for an entire Substitute Encyclopædia.

RONALD HINGLEY

## There'll Always Be a Cap d'Antibes

THE MEMOIRS OF AGA KHAN



OF AUTOBIOGRAPHIES of the eminent it may justly be said that the worse they are the better. I at any rate like them to be studded with 'Mr. (now Sir),' and to contain on every page at least one sentence like 'As I myself said to Lord Halifax when he was

Foreign Secretary, "You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

In this field *The Memoirs of Aga Khan* is a collector's item. Not a name which has flitted across the pages of newspapers in the last three decades is left out, and the Aga Khan's 'dear old friends' would, placed end to end, reach from Nice to Cannes. It is an enchanting, an exhilarating display of 'bromides and banalities such as have rarely before been collected together. There is nothing to get hold of, nowhere to find a foothold. In the words of the late Ramsay MacDonald ('At the height of his power . . . aplomb and adroitness . . . diplomatic skill and finesse . . . not unlike the driver who has eight spirited horses in his coaching team and is aware that any couple can and probably will go off on its own and seek to pull the coach in a totally different direction from that

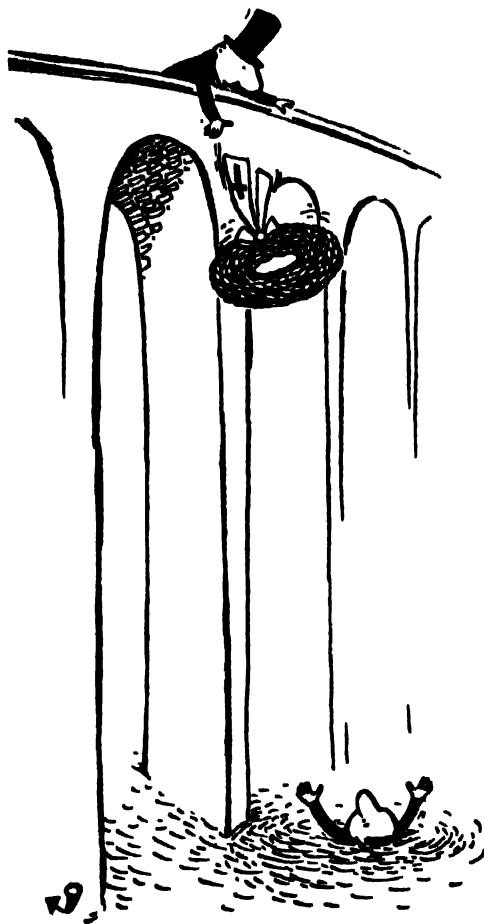
which he intends') it is a case of 'wandering and roaming in my library to be alone.' One flounders about, managing to seize a paragraph here, a sentence there; one marvels at so prodigious a capacity to say nothing about anyone or anything at such unconscionable length.

There is a natural inclination to wonder what sort of book the Aga Khan might have written. Not everyone, after all, combines being a kind of deity with being a racehorse owner and what newspapers used to call (especially when one of the species got into trouble) a 'well-known clubman.' Not everyone is weighed, successively, in silver, gold, platinum and diamonds, growing ever more substantial the while. The innocent cannot but suppose that such an odd situation in life must be capable of an exciting, or at any rate unusual, autobiographical presentation. Behind the peeling, stucco façade they divine an exotic interior.

And, of course, they are almost certainly wrong. Interior and exterior have a way of perfectly matching in this imperfect world. The Aga Khan, I suspect, really has given a true account of his life as he lived it. This is the true, the authentic he—this bumbling, platitudinous tiller in the vineyard of public affairs; this Imam who was dazzled by the intellectual brilliance of King Edward VIII and the charm of Mrs. Simpson ('Surely his former Majesty, King Edward VIII, who lost and sacrificed so much, has been granted, if not the supreme, at any rate the lesser and by no means unworthy blessing and illumination of a durable and all-enfolding love'); who through the successive stages of a dissolving Empire has managed to make his number with the faint luminaries of its dissolution.

There was, for instance, Lord Reading 'with the august aura of prestige which his status as an ex-Viceroy gave him.' There was Gandhi, in whose 'philosophical outlook and political work there were certain profound inconsistencies, which all his life he strove, without complete success, to reconcile.' There was Lord Mountbatten 'wrestling to bring about a solution, deploying all his tact and persuasiveness,' and Mussolini, and Sir Stafford Cripps, and Jawaharlal Nehru, and Maharajahs without number and even poor Farouk, who 'had it in him—if he had had proper guidance in his youth—to be a good and patriotic—perhaps a great—King of Egypt.'

One of the very few notes of complaint arises out



of the refusal by the Ministry of Agriculture here, at the beginning of the 1939/45 war, to purchase the Aga Khan's whole stable at 'not one tenth of their real value, and less than a fifth of the price I was on the verge of getting from the Italian Government.' This offer, the Aga Khan writes, 'which I believe to have been unique,' would 'have been of enormous benefit to agriculture, one of Britain's most vital industries in peace and in war.' To this day he finds its refusal incomprehensible. Actually, the Italian deal fell through, too, even though it 'had considerable support among people of standing.' The Aga Khan hoped to invest the proceeds in British war loans—a patriotic gesture which, in the circumstances, could not be made. It would be interesting to turn up the file (supposing it still exists) in the Ministry of Agriculture dealing with the Aga Khan's offer of his stud at a knockdown price in the winter of 1939/40.

From Lord Elgin to Mr. Krishna Menon is a large span ('My life in many ways has been a bridge across vastly differing epochs . . . I had a full life in the Victorian era, and am leading now an equally full life in this new Elizabethan era'), and though the Aga Khan has little of note or interest to say about it, one cannot but marvel at the toughness which has carried him through. There'll always be an England, and, I hope for his sake, a Cap d'Antibes.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

## Fine Reading for Anyone

TWO HUNDRED GOOD BOOKS; CARL BRAUN

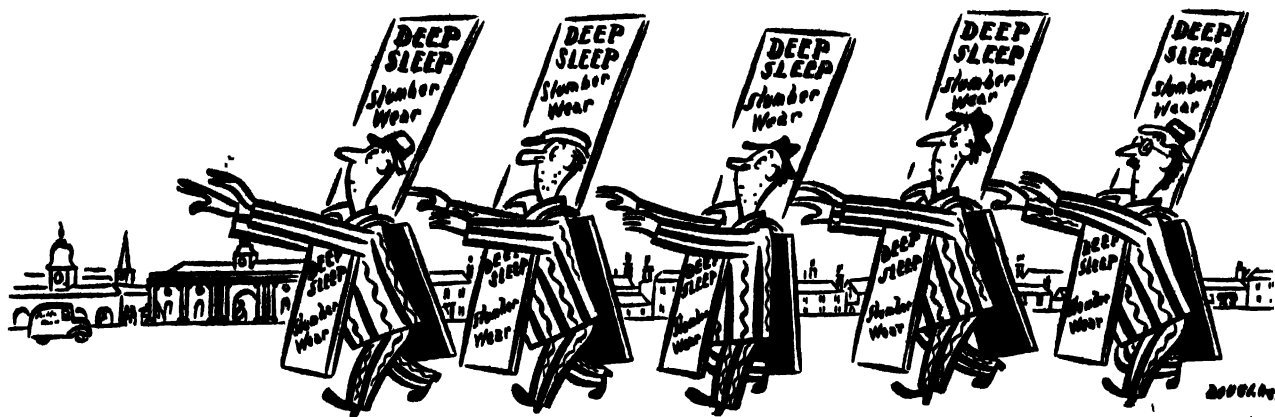
How easy it is to slump into sloppy reading habits. This dreadful truth has been brought home to me by coming upon one of the books that Mr. Carl Braun of California writes for his employees. *Two Hundred Good Books* is intended 'to aid the engineer and leader in fitting himself to be middleman to the social sciences.' The list of recommended books is roughly classified. 'But bear in mind that no classification is accurate. A book on history may contain much on leadership.'

Many of the books recommended are manuals of logic and composition, some by Mr. Braun himself, others by academic writers, but there is a good deal of space given to works of more strictly literary appeal. On many grounds, including variety, the Bible comes first. 'This collection of writings, if considered as a whole, may stagger and discourage a prospective reader. But, look at them as sixty-six separate books, and the task appears relatively easy.' The Bible contains much variety in its books. 'Some are books of homely philosophy that anyone can understand—notably the Book of Matthew.' Having mastered the Bible, leaders are recommended to try the Apocrypha, whose fourteen books 'consist largely of precepts for peaceful living. Fine reading for anyone.'

The next section is devoted to Philosophy. The work in the list that appeals to me most is Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses on Art*, for, as Mr. Braun points out, 'The treatment is along such broad lines that the word *Art* could be changed to *Engineering*, *Construction*, *Manufacturing*, *Accounting*, or almost anything else, without loss of effectiveness.' G. Lowes Dickinson's *After Two Thousand Years* does not attract me quite so much, though it is commended with the words, 'Everyone should have at least a speaking-acquaintance with the dialogue style.' Mr. Braun rarely omits word of praise for style, as opposed to content, and comments on *The Sense of Beauty* that Santayana's 'style of writing is rated as among the best for this class of subject.'

From Philosophy we come to Reasoning, especially *Novum Organum* by Sir Francis Bacon, 'A milestone in the history of straight thinking.' Sections follow fast, on Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Leadership.





*On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill is 'A classic on leadership.' Mr. Braun points out that in this essay Mill was thinking of the government of a State. He adds, 'Substitute the word *Company* for *State*, and the thing fits us to a tee.' In *Religio Medici* 'A physician prominent in his age sets down his ideas on getting along with others and on managing to lead a contented life. Written in 1643. Fine reading for anyone, especially for a leader.'

I cannot list all the sections of this absorbing guide. Flicking past *The Prince*, *Principles of Engineering Economy*, Macaulay's *History of England*, *The Iliad* and *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, we reach *Alice in Wonderland—Through the Looking Glass*. 'Alice in Wonderland and *Through the Looking Glass* were distinctly a side issue, done for Dodgson's young daughter. His keen insight into human conduct led him to enrich his entire text with a kindly satire on the ways of men.' Not all the books will be known to many readers over here. A new friend is *One Hundred and One Famous Poems* compiled by Roy J. Cook. 'This is a modern collection of down-to-earth poetry, all poetry that any of us can understand. No engineer or man of industry can afford to turn up his nose to the wealth of good sentiment and the strength of expression to be found in this little book. Furthermore the book embodies other interesting material. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Lincoln's Letter to Mrs. Bixby. The Ten Commandments. The Magna Charta. The Declaration of Independence.'

The second half of the book gives a straight list without comments. This is rewarding but baffling. To quote a random selection of titles, *The Æneid*,

Ogden's *Basic English*, Ernest Thompson Seton's *Biography of a Grizzly*, *The Correspondence of Prince Talleyrand and Louis XVIII*, *Hippocrates L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *The Limerick Book*, *Naval Leadership*, *The Laws of Hammurabi*, Dalton's *Public Finance* and *Quintilian*. At the end is a short list of reference books. Of Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* Mr. Braun observes: 'Anyone who wishes to lift his eyes above the narrow horizon of his craft or profession will not be without a Bartlett.'

I have omitted the many volumes dealing with subjects more nearly pressing on the engineer. As the total of all the books named is two hundred one can realize the care with which Mr. Braun had to make his selection. He says himself, 'In every case the book listed has had my careful and thoughtful reading. It has often been read by other of our leaders.' I wonder how many British employers take this much care to help their employees to widen their horizons. Paternalism has acquired a bad name in England and perhaps there are company chairmen who hang back from recommending *Æschylus* or Fowler's *Modern English Usage* because they fear a rebuff—even, perhaps, industrial unrest. Far too many industrialists waste hours on the golf course that would be better spent on *Aucassin and Nicolette* or *Readings in Business Cycle Theory*. It is in the hope of persuading British leaders of industry to reveal the names of their own favourite works and to comment upon them that I have taken the liberty of quoting so fully from Mr. Braun's pioneer work. It would be interesting to know the effect it has had upon output.

R. G. G. PRICE



## Department of Mutual Admiration

MR. CLEMENT ATTLEE

AMONG the books of 1954, I have read the concluding volume of the Prime Minister's history of the Second World War from cover to cover. I found it very interesting. I was a party to many of the discussions he mentions and it is very interesting to learn what transpired on occasions when I was not present. It is a finely written book and should be a reminder to us all of the days when we faced alone the dangers that threatened us. I cordially recommend it to all who, like me, enjoy an interesting book.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

Amid the cares and stirrs of the past year there has been but little time to devote to the study of literature whether of the present or the past. Among the five or six hundred volumes that were all I was able to peruse with the attention that is the right of all books deserving to be read at all I must single out the autobiographical volume of Mr. Attlee, who was by my side and played a stalwart part in the grim and unsettling days when we stood alone. Modestly it recounts the great events amid which so much of his life has been passed, and traces the various strands of experience that were woven into the sound homespun that we know and esteem. I was also much engaged and, I may say, tickled by Mr. P. G. Wodehouse's and Mr. Guy Bolton's *Bring on the Girls*. I have often thought that there is a resemblance between the planning and presentation of a musical entertainment of the spectacular kind and the mounting and launching of a campaign. All must be foreseen, all prepared. The theatrical impresario must win complete and lasting victory or go down in shame and ruin. So is it with the Captain. I hope that I may be spared to try my hand some day at such a challenging venture. I also was much rewarded by Mr. Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, and have set up a small Cabinet Committee to study whether we might not profit much from the introduction of mescaline into our British Mode of Life.

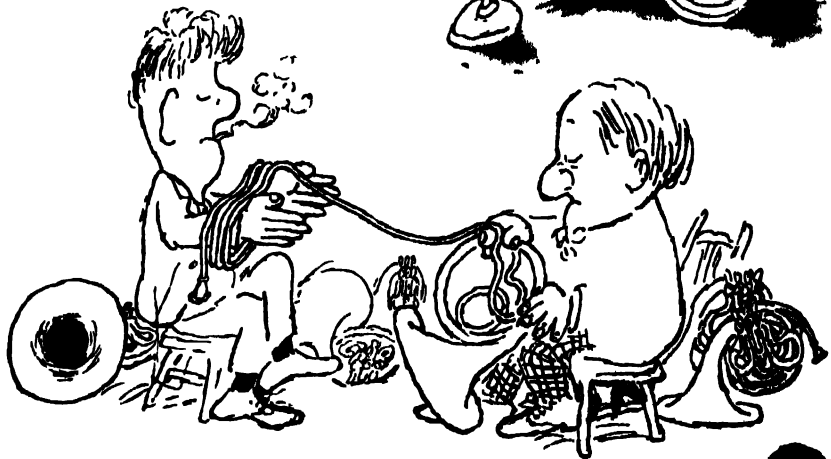
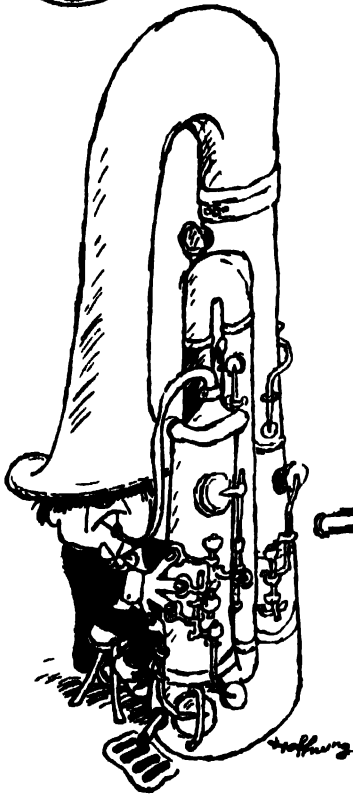
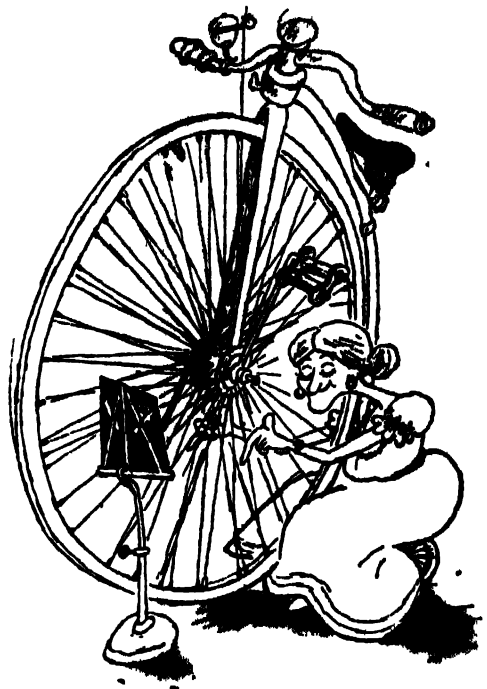
R. G. G. PRICE

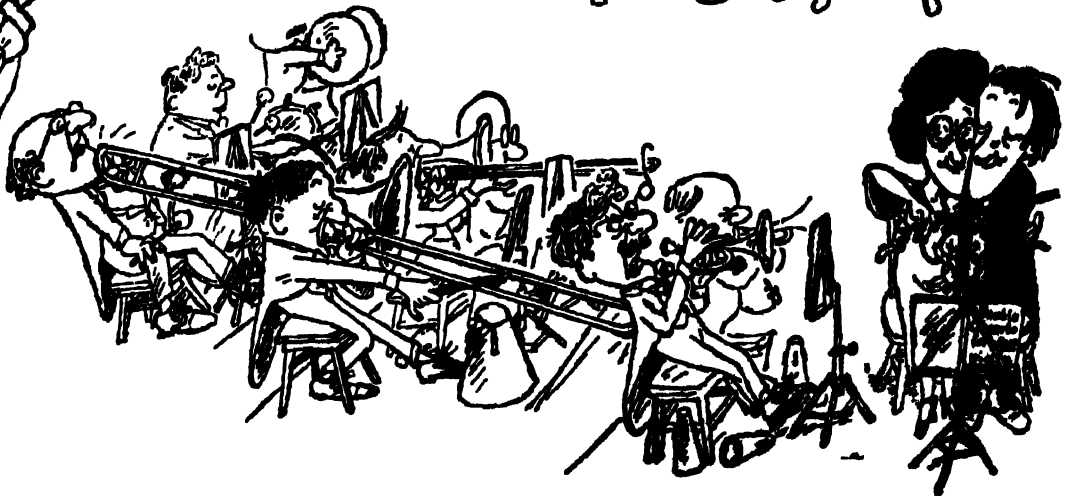
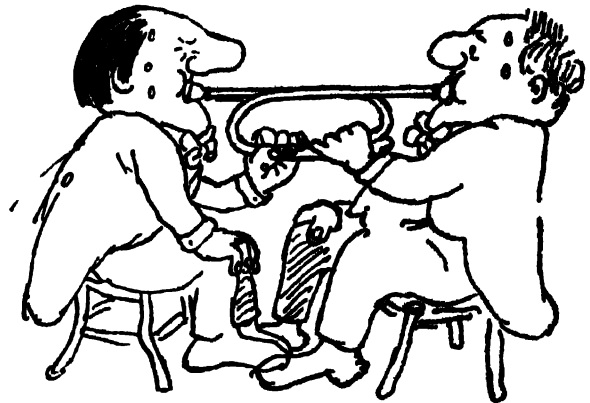
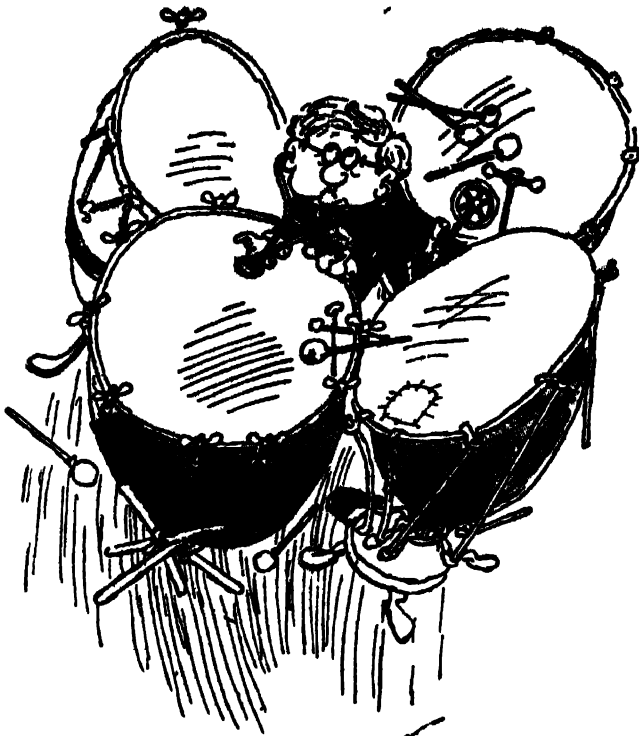


HARGREAVES.

# CONCERTO

by Hoffnung





# Faith Restored

You'd hardly think it to see me now, but I have to admit there was a time—along about the middle of last year—when I believe I was in very, very real danger of losing my faith in the Essence of British Bureaucracy. To-day that seems nearly incredible. Yet it was the state of mind, the sloppy, superficial attitude to life, into which I was unwittingly slipping.

And for the fact that I didn't, after all, slip the *whole* way, and that my faith is now firmer than ever, I want first and foremost to thank Britain's Inspector of Foreign Dividends, Inland Revenue, Kingston By-Pass Road, Surbiton, Surrey, Register Number F D C 22091. I do this not only in gratitude but because I am all too well aware that there may be others, reading these lines, who are in the same danger I once was in, and I am confident that if they only get in touch with him, he will help them.

Don't think I am trying to put the blame for that state of mind I got into on a 'bad home,' or any lack of proper guidance when I was younger. I don't suppose anyone was more carefully taught the Essence of Bureaucracy than I was. From my very earliest years the simple old truths had been instilled into me. If I did not know that Bureaucrats bumble, harass, procrastinate and ask a lot of damfool questions that nobody but a practised liar would even pretend to be able to answer accurately, it was not for want of tuition.

I knew almost by heart all the lovely old stories of the tea-drinking and the blood-sucking, and tears



GIOVANNETTI

used to come to my eyes whenever I heard one of our elders recite the movingly beautiful legend of the farmer whose one thousand acres turned into a dust-bowl behind his back while he was filling up forms in quintuplicate, or the grim old chant called 'Put it in the Pending, Mr. Riley.'

And then—it is seven or eight years ago now—I came to Ireland, and, little recking of the dangers I was running, settled here.

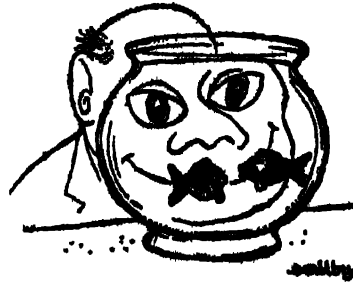
Perhaps some of you who are so ready to cast the first stone do not fully realize what it means for a person accustomed to the British Way of Life to find himself in an *almost pagan* atmosphere—an environment where many of the natives have hardly heard of Bureaucracy as we know it, let alone practised it. Nor—and this is possibly the most shocking and demoralizing aspect of the situation—do even the Bureaucrats always resist the prevailing laxness. I may tell you that very soon after I came here a Civil Servant in apparently good standing settled over the telephone in a matter of minutes a piece of business which should properly have engaged us in a correspondence lasting at least three months.

Can you wonder that my simple beliefs began to waver? That I began to have doubts, ask questions? And after a time I found myself consorting with loose types who, after a couple of drinks, would actually jeer at my cherished convictions, treating Bureaucracy lightly, as though it were something outside ordinary life.

At first I stood firm. I didn't, I declared, care what happened over here. I proclaimed my conviction that British Bureaucracy was harassing, bumbling, procrastinating and asking damfool questions with ardour undiminished.

But years slipped by. Nothing happened to confirm me in the dear, traditional beliefs. And after a time I was in little better case than many of my neighbours who, reading stories of bureaucracy in the English newspapers, were wont to dismiss them sneeringly as 'old wives' tales' unworthy of modern credence.

And then—it must have been some time in October 1954—something happened which proved a turning point. I was in London, and two publishers who owed me money rang me up and said a man from the Inland Revenue had come round to see them and told them absolutely not to pay it. And they said 'Why not?' and the man said 'Because he hasn't paid us his income tax.'



*'I wish he wouldn't do that.'*

You get an idea of the condition I had sunk into when I tell you that what I said to these publishers was 'Well, for heaven's sake just get these income-tax bozos on the blower and tell them I've been an Irish resident for about seven years and I don't have to pay British income tax.'

The publishers tried to reason with me, but I treated them frivolously, and a couple of weeks later asked why they didn't pay out. After a lot of argument back and forth they said, 'You must get form K3 from the Irish tax people, and fill it in, and have the Irish sign it, and send it to your agent over here. Just,' they said, to keep me quiet, 'a matter of routine.'

I wrote to a man in the city of Cork and asked him to get this Form K3 from the Irish tax people and send it over to me—'Just a simple routine matter,' I said. Nothing happened for a fortnight and then I got a pretty conspiratorial letter from him—you'd have thought we were still in the middle of the Troubles and the Tans were after us—saying that he had made inquiries about the matter I had referred to and that in a week or two he hoped to be contacting a certain party who might be trusted, and he would consult this party about Aunt Martha's health.

When I saw him in Cork a couple of weeks later he said the 'certain party' he had referred to was a man 'high up in the tax department' in Dublin, and probably this man could fix it.

'But there's nothing to fix!' I screamed. 'A mere matter of routine. Stands to reason. The English can't expect me to pay taxes to them when I'm living here.'

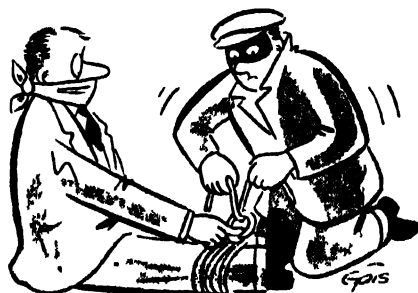
He looked at me sceptically, for he was an Irishman who had retained his faith in the nature of British Bureaucracy, and I went round to Government Buildings in Patrick Street to get the form.

How long would it take, I asked, for them to return me the completed form, properly attested and stamped by them? Normally they said, a fortnight. I told them about my frozen funds, explained urgency of situation. In that case, they said, courteously, they would take exceptional steps. After all it was quite a hole to be in, was it not? And they sent K3 back to me, signed and stamped, in three days flat, and I shot the thing off to my Agent in London. We are now in the first week in January.

I let a week or so go by, then wrote to the publishers saying 'Exemption signed and delivered, so pay out.' At such evidence of paganism they ululated, tore their hair. Didn't I understand that time, *time* was required for the British authorities to pass this Form K3 from hand to hand, perhaps studying it with microscopes to see whether the Irish official stamp on it were forged? How much time? Two weeks—might just possibly be a month.

My faith in the Tenets of Bureaucracy was returning, but still weak—as is shown by the fact that after four weeks I really thought the 'mere matter of routine' would have been completed. And it was then—on February 4—that F D C 22091 Inspector of Foreign Dividends, Inland Revenue, Kingston By-Pass Road, Surbiton, stepped in to take me by the hand and bring me face to face with those Old Truths once more.

Quite simple, as though the matter had just arisen, he wrote asking me to be 'good enough to furnish full particulars of the sources from which the income forming the subject of the claim is derived.' Sublime. No silly reference, you notice, to the fact that the Irish, before granting exemption, had been furnished all those particulars long before, no suggestion that where an Irish resident, voter, and taxpayer gets his money from is none of Mr. Surbiton's darn business. Grand, traditional stuff.



I sent him the information, via my agent, who wrote me a letter which at first was rather a blow to my newly-reacquired convictions because it appeared that the agent had actually been able to *telephone* to Mr. Surbiton and 'after some difficulty'—why only *some* difficulty? they ought to have made it harder than that—had secured an assurance that the matter would be settled within a day or two.

Despite the shock I was glad, in a way, because just then the Irish Tax Inspector had come round with his Final Demand Notice. When I asked how I was supposed to pay my Irish taxes when the British were preventing me getting any money, he said 'But it's automatic—the moment you get the Form K3 signed by us, they have to pass it. It's what we do when the situation is reversed.' I looked at him mournfully—just another unbeliever.

Ten days or a fortnight passed, and then, on March 30, High Priest Surbiton played his revivalist masterstroke. (A beautiful touch was that he now called himself F D C 21909—going *backwards*.) He wrote asking me to 'be good enough to state' what was 'the address and reference number of H.M. Inspector of Taxes to whom returns were submitted by you whilst resident in the United Kingdom,' and—after a couple more trivial queries—to state 'the number of days you expect to spend in the United Kingdom in the Income Tax year 1955/56, and future years.'

Oh boy! I can tell you my faith leaped up and burned with a hard jewel-like flame.

It was with the feelings of a penitent on the way to Mecca that I started to write the letter confessing the amazing fact that after only seven and a half years I *could not remember* the name, the address, or even the ticket *number* of that dear old Tax Inspector. (I realized, with a shock, that I had even forgotten the address of the grocer I went to at that time, although the grocer was a man I had actually seen.)

After so humiliating a confession, I felt I must do something to rehabilitate myself. I *must* answer the last question in detail, restraining the impulse to state baldly that I hoped, in the circumstances, gradually to reduce the number of days spent in the United Kingdom to Nil.

Just how many days do I expect to spend there in 1975, at the age of seventy-one? In this stable, well-ordered world, it seems crazily, almost criminally, irresponsible not to know.

CLAUD COCKBURN

# Nocturne in All Flats

Now falls the circumambient pall of Night  
O'er all the maisonettes of S.E.3.  
Immediately they all switch off the light  
And leave the world to darkness and TV.

Stabbing the studded sable of the sky  
(Full marks!) lone churches raise aerial flèches,  
A hundred-thousand-fold outnumbered by  
The maisonettes that raise their aerial Hs.

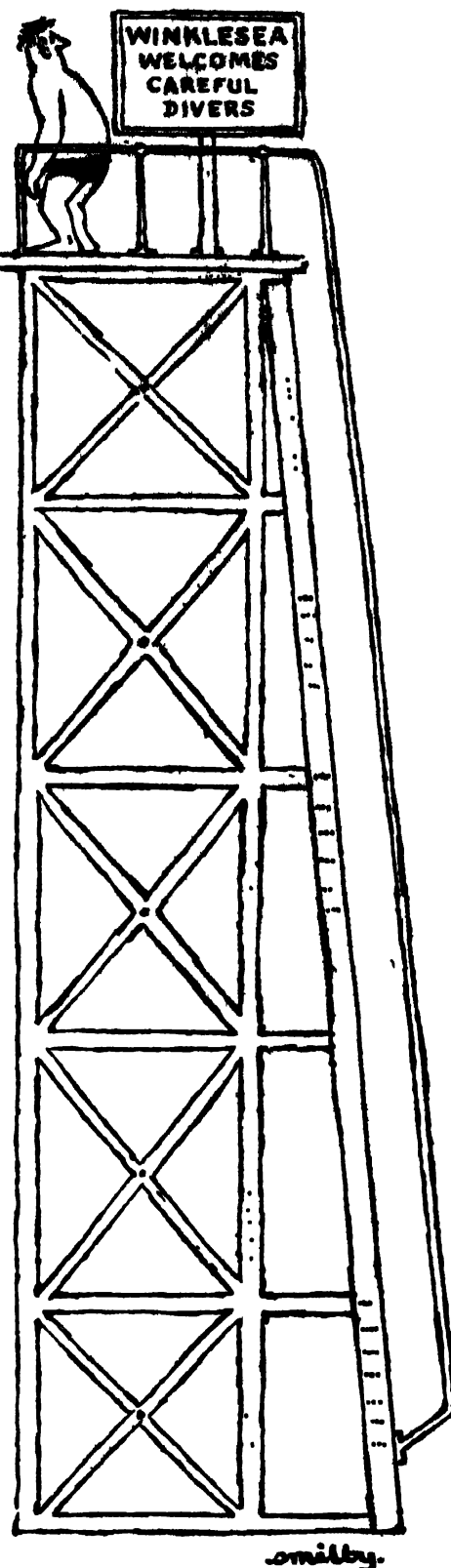
Under those prongs the rude forefather sits,  
Doped by the programme's anæsthetic rot,  
Potential rod of empire all to bits,  
Celestial fire, etc., gone to pot.

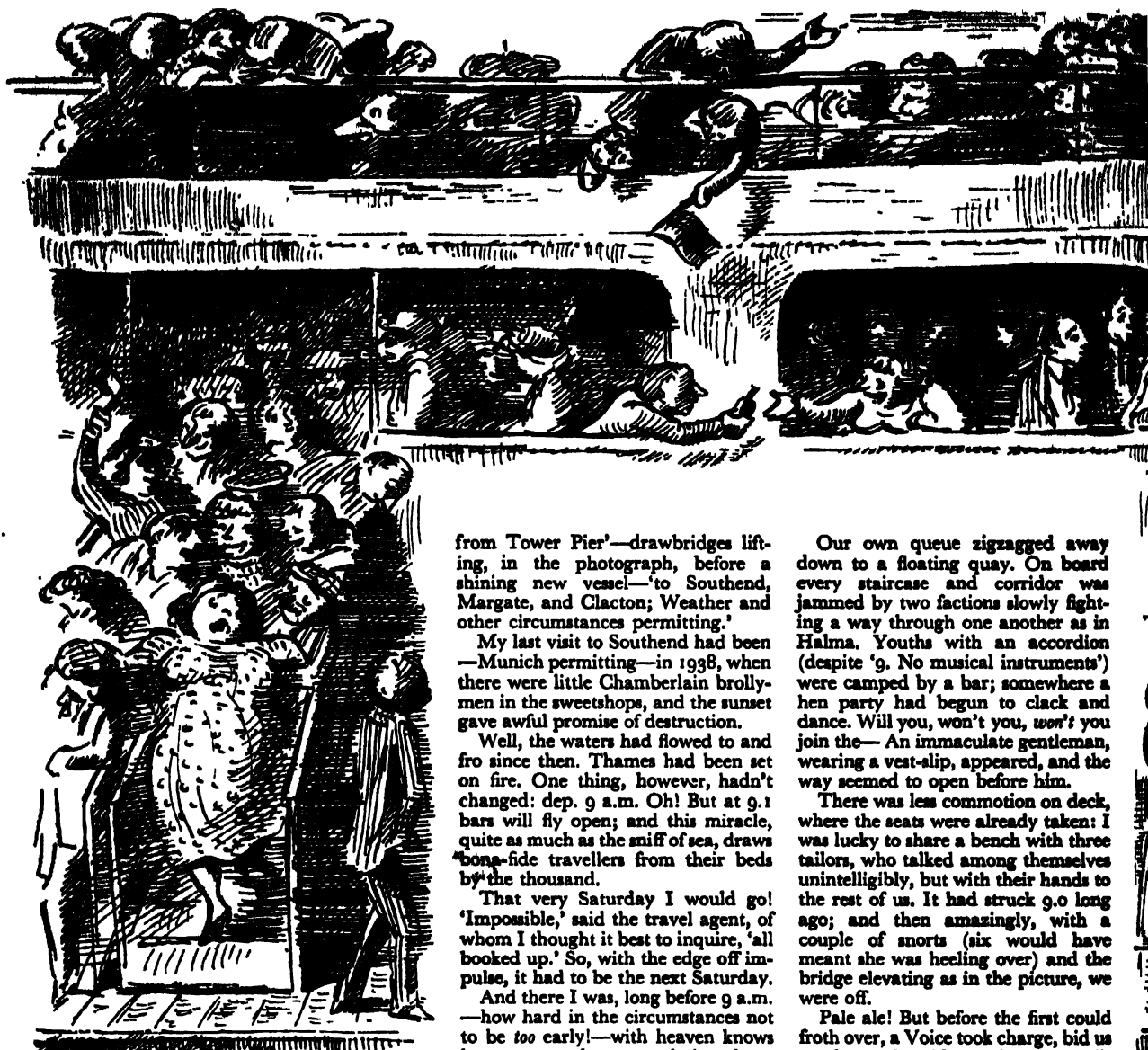
Here wilts a T. S. Eliot unborn;  
There Sitwells droop whom Foyle's shall never  
know;  
A Churchill watered down by Kenneth Horne;  
An Eisenhower sunk by 'Down You Go.'

However—here I closely follow Gray—  
Inglorious Bevans also blush unseen;  
Suburb McCarthys, mute, of purest ray,  
Waste all their fragrance on their TV screen.

That being so, our gloom can be alloyed:  
All mortal odds should, e.g., guarantee  
For each rude Winston lost that we avoid  
Three Gilbert Hardings, ruder still. Suits me!

JUSTIN RICHARDSON





IT BEGAN in the east wind, with a sandwich-board man—one of those forlorn heralds who apprise us of Doom, Fury, or the new Pakistani restaurant round the corner—handing me a leaflet; thus I at once pocketed; my coat went to the cleaner's, and out of it came various shop receipts, a farthing, an unknown button and the forgotten leaflet.

'Eagle Steamers!' I read, smoothing it out: 'Day Cruises to the Sea

from Tower Pier'—drawbridges lifting, in the photograph, before a shining new vessel—to Southend, Margate, and Clacton; Weather and other circumstances permitting.'

My last visit to Southend had been—Munich permitting—in 1938, when there were little Chamberlain brollymen in the sweetshops, and the sunset gave awful promise of destruction.

Well, the waters had flowed to and fro since then. Thames had been set on fire. One thing, however, hadn't changed: dep. 9 a.m. Oh! But at 9.1 bars will fly open; and this miracle, quite as much as the sniff of sea, draws bona-fide travellers from their beds by the thousand.

That very Saturday I would go! 'Impossible,' said the travel agent, of whom I thought it best to inquire, 'all booked up.' So, with the edge off impulse, it had to be the next Saturday.

And there I was, long before 9 a.m.—how hard in the circumstances not to be too early!—with heaven knows how many others, wandering down over the cobbles, squeezing between parked chara-bancs, dodging cars and kiosks, linked arms, fish-porters looking like damp peons. A taxi or two. Fat woman pleading with officials for her fat pug. But what says No. 6 of Important Notes? 'No dogs are carried.' Damning the universe, a great dray drawn by chestnuts charged uphill under the lowering sky.

'You can just as well get wet here,' said the beefeater to his small attendance for the Children's Beach.

Our own queue zigzagged away down to a floating quay. On board every staircase and corridor was jammed by two factions slowly fighting a way through one another as in Halma. Youths with an accordion (despite '9. No musical instruments') were camped by a bar; somewhere a hen party had begun to clack and dance. Will you, won't you, *won't* you join the—An immaculate gentleman, wearing a vest-slip, appeared, and the way seemed to open before him.

There was less commotion on deck, where the seats were already taken: I was lucky to share a bench with three tailors, who talked among themselves unintelligibly, but with their hands to the rest of us. It had struck 9.0 long ago; and then amazingly, with a couple of snorts (six would have meant she was heeling over) and the bridge elevating as in the picture, we were off.

Pale ale! But before the first could froth over, a Voice took charge, bid us good morning (shrugs from the tailors), embraced the riverscape, called on Mr. Boyle's party to proceed to the forward dining saloon for breakfast, coughed, and put on a gramophone record.

'My Baby Loves Me,' as Greenwich, noble and deserted, slid into view, followed by Woolwich, Erith and Silvertown—all seemingly stricken by the explosion of the last—and so past the maiden liner *Ostrava* and a cluster of sail barges to long bare river walls broken by an occa-





sional village or factory. Here Good Queen Bess yelled 'I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman,' there pylons out-topped St. Paul's Cathedral.

We didn't miss much, and it all had a Stygian charm, enhanced by the atmospheric blight that seemed endemic.

To the throb of the engines, breakfast followed breakfast (but where, now, were the *remaining* members of Mr. Boyle's party?), beer chased beer, and the crowd had begun to get the measure of itself. We were gay in spots. We drank from bottles, and surreptitiously felt for sandwiches, spectators of fun rather than fun ourselves; two thousand of us from the Home Counties, as it might be at the Ideal Home Exhibition or panto on ice.

The river spread out, losing the Kent coast, and in a haze we were touched by the blank surmise of *Outward Bound*. Hours late, should we ever see Southend? Bottles flew overboard. A chorus welled up: 'Mother Brown,' followed surprisingly by 'O come all ye faithful.' Two teddy-boys waffled past, short of stature and trouser, but long-coated and long-haired. A gimlet of a woman, with tiny grey topper askew, danced a jig. The immaculate gentleman was seen on the captain's bridge, raising binoculars; a waiter ran up to him, and he drank off what could only be—the gesture asserted—a stiff whisky.

Then the end of the mile-long pier loomed ahead, and we all started

shoving our way downstairs. When we emerged it was a new, blue-and-white day.

Southend is a fun-fair and a parade for the paper-hatted—with sombreros, bobby's helmets, and jockey's caps much fancied—and the crawl to and fro along the pier and a bobbing of boats and a mud-flattery and cockles and giggly postcards and open-top buses and 'Torture through the Ages' and the tide bringing back the icecream cartons, and four hours of it was just enough.

The boat might be late (and was, by an hour), but not so the gangs, the families, the coach parties and the couples, swarming back to make their long, long queue.

The immaculate stranger watched our embarkation with the interest of one who has done the full trip to Margate, Clacton, and the open sea, and perhaps availed himself of the telephone service on board (10/6 to any part of the British Isles). A glass of whisky in hand bespoke continuity.

Cheerier all round was the way home, with circles growing and voices raised in song *against* the loudspeaker, 'My Darling Clementine,' 'Madelmoiselle from Armentiers,' and 'Don't have any more, Mrs. More'—all those female old contemptibles who assail the Cockney at dusk. Beer and stout flowed; high tea (up to 9/6, with lobster) tempted some, gin others; silhouettes brought the shore near; lights wriggled; we sweetly drawn out. All the time I couldn't help feeling I



had lost something—pocket book, pen, key-ring . . . myself . . .

It was dark and quiet when we glided again under the upraised bridge to find—oh, so unreal, unexpected and beautiful!—the Tower lit up; and rather sadly, as the decks were being swept of our rubbish, the bottles piled, we melted away in the gloom of a hill famous for execution and riot.

G. W. STONIER

# The Last Tooth

It stood there, a living monument to its dead fellows, dating from (I suppose) the South African War. Conscious of genuineness, it would curl my lip in derision of those prefabricated others which surrounded it. I valued it not only as a souvenir but as a guarantee of good faith; deceit might be found in my mouth, but it was tethered, by a gold band, to reality. I was careful not to overstate the case; 'Don't do that,' I have been saying, these last three years, 'you set my tooth on edge.' And 'I am beginning to get my tooth into this proposition.' And even (in the case of burglars) 'Perhaps I ought to warn you that I am armed to the tooth.' To-day, I no longer use metaphors; my tooth has been drawn.

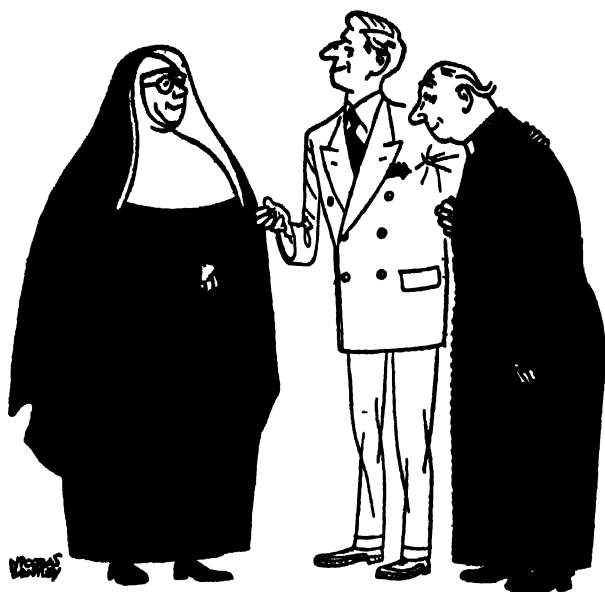
It wasn't hurting exactly, but it was (as I told the dentist with a touch of assumed heroism) 'a bit tender.' The point was really that it was loose, and I was afraid it might come out in the course of ordinary mastication, without gas. Unlike most of my friends, I have a passion for gas—the even, pleasantly laboured breathing, the sensational dreams, the conviction, seldom absent, that in the moment of waking you have solved the whole riddle of existence. I

always try to confide this to the dentist without delay, only eliciting the reply 'Rinse well, please.' If I am ever found with my head in the oven I hope the jury will realize that it was an overdose of my favourite drug. But there is only one *excuse* for taking gas—having a tooth out. And it was my last tooth.

My dentist could be trusted for an extraction. When I had still three teeth left I remember telling a friend that Mr. — was not likely to emulate the Ancient Mariner. He had his shirt-sleeves rolled up, and there was a stranger present, not the usual anaesthetist. I asked him, in some panic, whether he practised hypnotism; it seemed not. The familiar ritual was followed. 'Through the nose, please . . . That's right, quite gently, through the nose.' A comfortable darkness enveloped me. The tooth came out, bystanders assured me afterwards, quite easily; so easily (psychologists please note) that no revelation of ultimate truth was granted me. I rinsed well, and was told to sit there quietly, recovering from the debauch.

I found myself rehearsing a little speech in my mind. 'Well, gentlemen, we have (in a very real sense) come to the end of the row. I have been taking the chair at meetings of this kind for many years past, and I think it's true to say that I have never opened my mouth without receiving respectful attention. I won't deny that there have been painful moments, moments at which I should have felt inclined to express myself strongly if I had been in a position to speak with greater freedom. But on the whole our motto has been "A strong pull all together," and our proceedings have never left a nasty taste in the mouth. Gentlemen, it may not have been a wrench for you, but it has for me; good afternoon.' That was the general outline of it, but since my dentures had gone downstairs to be altered, I had to shorten it into 'Hwa' you wewy uh.'

Round at the barber's, the man said he hoped it would be many years before he found himself cutting my last hair; but it was a specious effort at consolation. Hair is but an appendage; when we lack it our friends say 'He is going bald'; they do not state the plain fact that we are becoming hairless. But toothlessness is a predicament for which our language has no hypocorism; it is a secret shame not to be mentioned. To be sure, it can be disguised far more efficiently than hairlessness. A wig, even if it is not



*'Father, I want you to meet Mother.'*

bought at the expense of the tax-payer, rarely deceives; whereas I read an article by a dentist the other day in which he boasted that a client, when a decayed front tooth was replaced by a stand-in, had three proposals in a fortnight. But hair is an integument; teeth are functional. My admirable dentures, though not perhaps calculated to excite emotion, hoodwink the public well enough; but they do not hold a pipe as I used to be able to hold it, I am for ever brushing away ashes, and sometimes they burn holes.

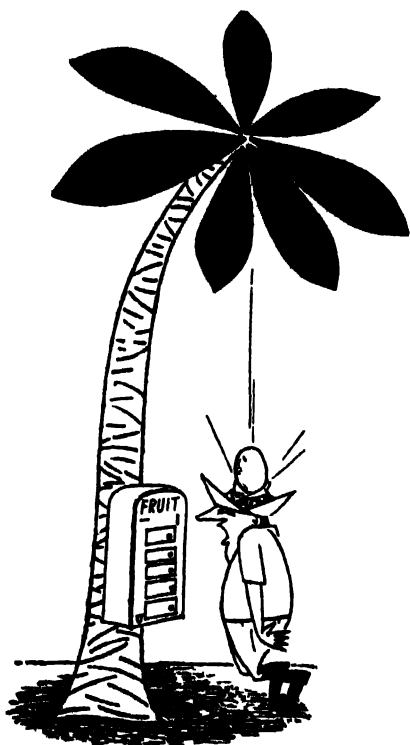
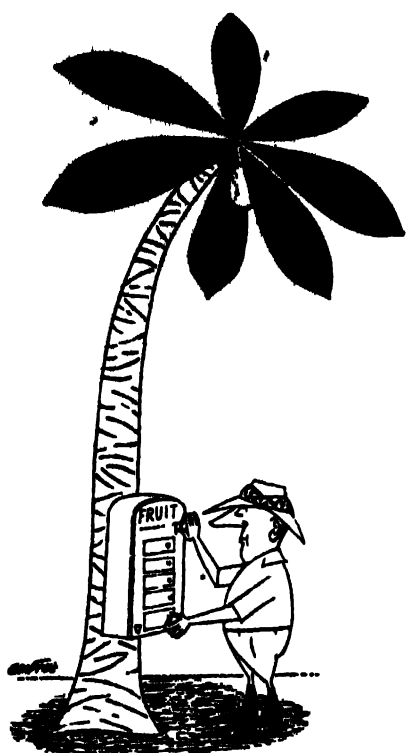
Going to bed that night was the really shaming performance. Man is, after all, a creature of the rut, and never more so than when he goes to bed. The whole process, from long use, has become automatic; how surely the unwound watch convicts us of revelry overnight! When we were young, and still learning the drill, our elders used to pop their heads in and ask 'Have you said-your-prayers-and-brushed-your-

teeth?'—as if the two obligations rested on a common basis. And here was I, with a glass of warm water filled according to custom, stretching out my hand to grasp the familiar brush, the companion of so many travels . . . My days linked each to each by natural piety, I was for brushing my tooth before retiring. The bristles swept, rather painfully, over an exposed gum. In silence (for I was in no position to enunciate dentals) I took up my false-tooth brush.

My real-tooth-brush looked up at me with an air of thwarted expectation, like a dog that is not to be taken out for a walk. Some use must be found for it, even if I have to clean the keys of my typewriter. Meanwhile, here is a free offer to any reader who cares to defray the cost of postage—a tube of tooth-paste, only half-used, and tasting rather unpleasantly of aniseed.

R. A. KNOX





## Plaint for a Quarter Day

I WAS always a simple, likeable chap  
With few extravagant aims.  
I should never have pressed for a place in the Test  
Or the panel of parlour games.  
I have never been keen to star on the screen,  
Or longed to be called My Lord,  
Or set my eyes on a Nobel Prize  
Or a Book of the Month award.  
The only thing I wanted was money,  
A solid, sizable sum of money;  
And this I never secured.

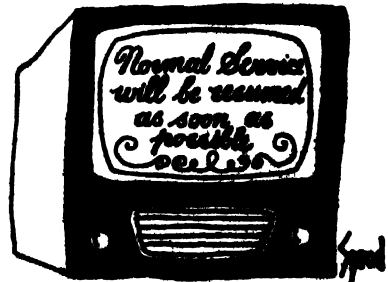
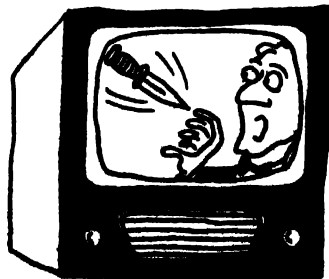
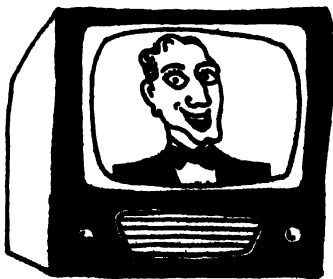
The men who really have got the money  
Are inexpressibly sad,  
And would give the lot for a little of what  
I always seem to have had.  
The biggest guns have Socialist sons  
Or livers that lead them a dance,  
And shipping kings do desperate things  
On yachts in the South of France.  
They get no fun from all their money;  
But I could be happy on half their money  
If only I had the chance.

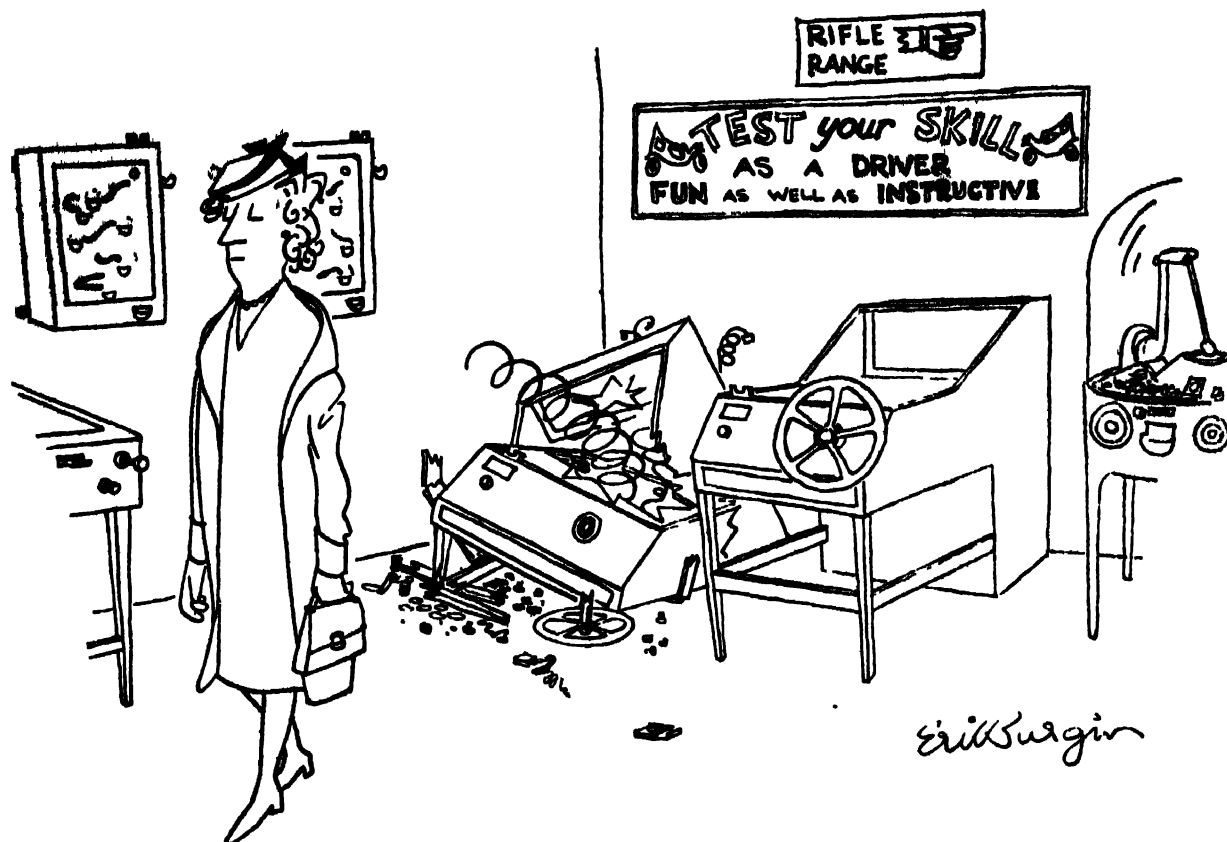
By contrast, I have beautiful thoughts  
And elegant eyes and hands,  
A cultured taste, and a slender waist,  
And bountiful ductless glands.  
I've a knowledge of Greek, and a rosy cheek,  
And books with beautiful themes,  
And hours of deep, refreshing sleep  
Beset with innocent dreams.  
I have all the things the experts say  
Are the noblest things they know,  
And I would gladly give them away  
For a dollop of solid dough.  
The only thing I want is money:  
But I never seem to have any money,  
And that's the way things go.

P. M. HUBBARD



*'Have you a copy of The Gentlewoman?'*





## Marriage à la Mode

DEAR MADGE,—I am surprised you accepted him. Wild flowers in the Home Counties does not sound a very paying line to me, not when you think of what some of the husband-and-wife teams are raking in. Doris and Claud just laze on the beach at home and if they want to pay a bill they take a cine-camera with them while they laze and whenever any birds fly overhead they film them. Then, Maud and Bill have signed up for filming Junior. They're going to take one a month of him for the next ten years, so that he can develop in public. Really, Madge, why did you ever turn down Jack? I know there was a good deal of him missing but nobody came out better in a frontispiece and you always looked well in a topee. That devil-may-care way of yours would have gone well with alligators.

This Howard won't take you up into the big money ever unless you make up his mind to, say, a month's hardship a year. You could probably make

enough what with films, TV, books and serial rights out of going over waterfalls in barrels, and that would take only a few minutes. All the rest could be lazing about in lovely country getting ready and then recovering a bit in lovely country lower down. Niagara would be just a start, a beginner's run. There are most likely waterfalls wherever there are rivers and mountains. There are the Victoria Falls in Africa and the differences between Africa and the United States—Canadian border would need thousands of words to drive right home to the reader.

The barrel would have to be big enough to hold two and there would be some publicity there about living or dying together. I reckon you could find waterfalls in Tibet and then there would be the additional interest of Communists trying to stop what you were doing, which would make it democratic, wouldn't it? Soon I reckon there will be the Moon opened up to husband-and-wife teams, and I should

think there would be plenty of unused waterfalls there, though I can never remember what I read in Science Fiction and perhaps their water doesn't have any oxygen in it or runs uphill or something. However, Howard does not sound the type.

Len and I are going on a walking tour from Land's End next month. What with getting really photogenic aqualungs and selecting shark bait and brushing up our Roman ceramics we are in a terrible rush. We reckon that in four days' hard walking we can get enough material to keep us in a luxury hotel for four months. If we could wheel Poppet with us we could get enough for six months; but she will keep throwing things out of the pram and we should always be trying to dredge toys out of the silt. Of course we shall spend the nights on board the escort vessel, unless we can find a conveniently sited wreck with the hammocks still intact, though fish wake you up in the night worse than rats.

If you insist on sticking to Wild Flowers you could at least combine it with having a young chimpanzee as one of the family. There could be a gag about this Howard preferring it to you and buying it hats and giving it the titbits at meals; if you have titbits. I can't remember any. You could take it over waterfalls with you.

You remember my sister Denise? She's married a man from a bank called Max and they are cycling across deserts with an escort caravan for the film technicians, etc. While they are working over the material at home, they spend two days a week demonstrating and criticizing. Flower Arrangements. That's what I like about Denise, plenty of initiative. Their next trip they are going to take a good-looking Swede along and have her break up the marriage and then have people reconciling them on TV and all the divorce proceedings televised right round till they immediately remarry.

They are always planning ahead, and next year they begin to nurse adjoining constituencies. Max will be a Tory rebel and Denise a Labour rebel; once you are in good with the Whips no agent will take you on his books. They are making a beginning by arguing politics while they do their Flower Arrangements on TV. If there were only Colour TV they could do red Flower Arrangements for the Labour Home Beautiful and blue Flower Arrangements for the Tory Home Beautiful. I suppose later they will have to have a Liberal as neutral chairman and they could do yellow Flower Arrangements for him.

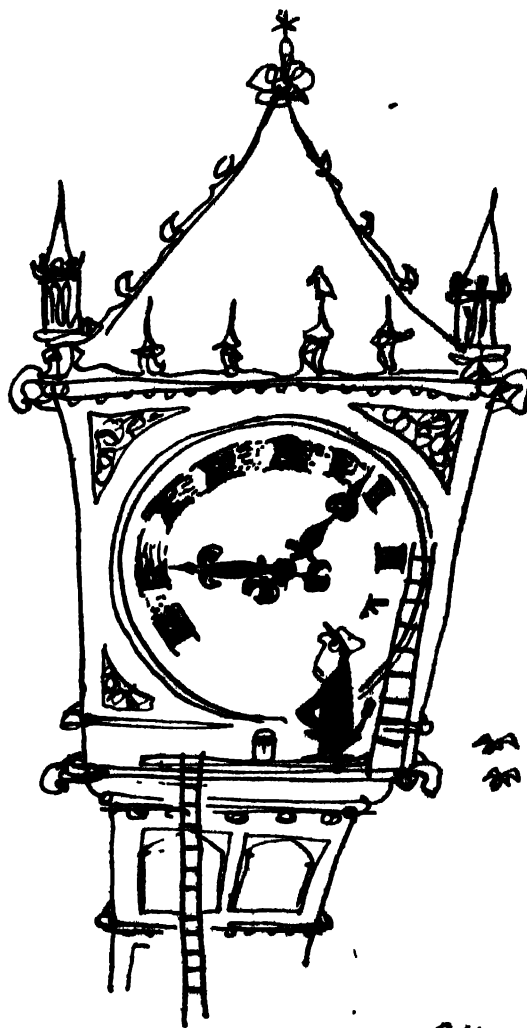
Uncle and Auntie Fitzclarence ask to be remembered to you. They are working on a series about spreading Morris Dancing in the Gobi.

Do buck up and make something of your marriage.  
Love,

Ivy.

P.S.—By the way, if you are wondering about my birthday present, I should love a TV make-up pack.

R. G. G. PRICE





*Silence*

*'We're rather worried about William.'*







## Poor Man's Lawyer

OPINIONS are divided as to the best way of spending the first uneventful, unremunerative years at the Bar. Some remain disconsolately in their Chambers playing cricket in the passages or learning *grospoint*; others venture out into the world in the hope that some solicitor's daughter will propose marriage to them or that they may have the opportunity of saving a solicitor's clerk from drowning; some even sit in the Law Courts listening, with surprise, to the great advocates of their day and wondering how they got their practices. The time will come, however, when they all begin to wonder if they will ever open their mouths in court. It is then that someone is bound to say 'Have you ever thought of being a poor man's lawyer?'

Offices of poor men's lawyers are run in various parts of London, usually as an annexe to the more vital parts of the social services which consist of

pingpong and lectures on the New Orleans style of jazz illustrated with gramophone records. The volunteer lawyer arrives in the early evening and sits sadly in an office gazing at a photograph of King George V and listening to the nearby strains of Meade Lux Lewis. In the outer office the volunteer lady help is sorting out the clients, reducing their stories to one incomprehensible paragraph dotted with exclamation marks and written with indignant splutters of her cross-nibbed pen.

Inside the volunteer solicitor says to the volunteer barrister: 'Wonderful opportunities for gaining experience down here, you know. Why, you might even pick up a murder one night down here.' Together they look out wistfully at the East End street and the dark mass of buildings, as if hoping for a scream.

In fact, of course, the opportunities are wonderful,

although an innocent accused of murder is unlikely to drop in during the course of the evening. There are opportunities for expounding the rent acts to mothers who, without baby-sitters, have their two youngest on their laps, gazing open-eyed and sceptical at the barrister who, in the face of that infant stare, slowly begins to lose confidence in the soundness of his advice. Moreover he can, if he thinks the cases are such that they need representing in the local County or Magistrates' Courts, get himself a brief from the solicitor who runs the office, even if it means writing it out himself. He can also write two guineas on the front, which, though in all probability it will never be paid, at least begins to give him the illusion of being employed.

Although the Legal Aid Act, which was passed in 1949, has been successful in releasing a stream of defended divorce actions on the High Court, those sections of it which provided for setting up legal advice centres and giving assistance in the lower and most popular courts have never been put into force. In consequence, legal advice is still given, for half a crown in the box, among the tea urns in the social clubs, and East End police courts often have two or three young men with names on their briefs which may have been written in their own handwriting. They learn a lot, how to deal with London magistrates for one thing; and no advocate who can efficiently keep at bay a hostile magistrate is going to have the slightest trouble with any High Court Judge, Law Lord or Lord of Appeal. They also learn how to conduct and even win cases in which all the witnesses are either stone deaf, Polish, or terrified of the police or, most frequently, all three at once.

But there are great satisfactions: injustices which probably escaped the lady in the outer office are occasionally corrected, mothers recover their children or families preserve their flats with the help of the poor man's barrister. Often, too, more doubtful cases are won. Recently a bastardy summons was taken out against the hero of the social club, the fly-weight champion of a group of East London Boys' Clubs. The accusation was indignantly denied. At the time in question he had been in strict training. It was a point of honour to defend him. Accordingly a poor man's lawyer was briefed for the hypothetical two guineas. Exercising his by now practised snake-charmer's power over the hostile court, he got the magistrate, grumbling, to admit that although he was personally satisfied it was all true he supposed

the charge hadn't been made out in law. On his way out the barrister noticed that the court was full of girls about the same age as the complainant. He asked the boy about this and was told that they were all girls from his street who had agreed to regard this as a test case; if he had been defeated they would all have taken out summonses. He then produced five pounds in notes which, unfortunately, the etiquette of the Bar prevented the barrister from accepting.

As the years go by the poor man's barrister begins to receive briefs which have been typed out by other people, marked with figures which represent real money. He appears in courts where the habit of shouting from the Bench is kept more or less under control. In time, to the injury of his soul, he refuses to do anything at all for nothing. It is doubtful, however, if any of his subsequent victories will elate him more than those he obtained, after three adjournments for a fortnight, in the East End courts. It is also useful to remember, if you are in trouble with the law, that until the advice centres are set up you can get an enthusiastic, if immature, opinion for only half a crown in the box.

GEOFFREY LINCOLN

## The Driver's Song

*'Undoubtedly one reason for the unpopularity of the [lodging-turn] system is that it often involves . . . the parting of a driver from his own engine, to which he is strongly attached.'*—New Statesman and Nation.

THERE is an Engine sweet and kind,  
Was never train so pleased my mind;  
I may but drive her Tue. to Fri.,  
And yet I love her till I die.

Her boiler, valve-gear and her dome,  
Her footplate makes my second home,  
The home my lodging-turns deny,  
And yet I love her till I die.

Cruel is Western Region, deaf  
The heartless A.S.L.E.F.;  
But in whatever shed she lie  
I yet will love her till I die.

B. A. YOUNG

# Potted Swan

How uneconomical is the Old Vic's cumbrous plan (not yet remotely within sight of completion) to perform the entire canon of Shakespeare's plays in slow, arbitrary succession from *Henry VI, Part I* to *The Tempest*! Michael Benthall had the right idea when he opted, as director, for a single Permanent Set to cover the scenic contingencies of any one play in the canon. What he now needs is a single Permanent Play.

This should contain only the most memorable lines that Shakespeare ever wrote anywhere (no line or even half-line would be permitted that was *not* written by Shakespeare) and the piece could impressively be performed by a resident company, at regular intervals and proportionately low cost, for the benefit either of intellectual American tourists passing frantically through England or of busy English theatre-goers with little cultural spare-time on their hands. These fortunate people would, in fact, be seeing what was best in all Shakespeare's plays compressed or 'digested' (as the current phrase goes) into one play. The Permanent Set is ideally suited to the drama's *mise en scène*.

ACT I. *A wood.*

ACT II. *Another part of the same wood.*

ACT III. *The same part of another wood.*

*Enter a GRAVEDIGGER, blowing his nail.*

GRAVEDIGGER: My stomach is not constant.  
*Throws up a skull.*

Mark ye how,

In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
I summon up remembrance of things past.

*Throws up another skull.*

Say, I am sick.

*Enter Juliet's NURSE.*

NURSE: To bed, to bed, to bed!

GRAVEDIGGER: Heigh-ho, the wind! Pray you, undo this button.

NURSE: 'Tis here?

GRAVEDIGGER: 'Tis *there*.

NURSE: 'Tis gone.

GRAVEDIGGER:

Why so!—being gone, I am a man again.  
Give me to drink mandragora.

NURSE:

Alas,

I have it not—not poppy nor mandragora.  
(*Helpfully*) Wouldst drink up eisel? Eat a crocodile?

GRAVEDIGGER: What manner o' thing is your crocodile?

NURSE: A morsel for a monarch.

*He eats.*

GRAVEDIGGER:

O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew\*  
That droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon St. Crispin's Day. Rumble thy bellyfull!  
Blow me about in wind! O dainty duck,  
Nature's sweet nurse, O true apothecary,  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon my heart!

NURSE: Have you no bowels?

GRAVEDIGGER: This was the most unkindest cut of all.

NURSE: I pray you, sir, lie in my tent and sleep.

GRAVEDIGGER: Macbeth hath murdered sleep. Come,  
sing me a bawdy song; make me merry.

*Enter LADY FAULCONBRIDGE, fantastically dressed up with flowers, carrying wine and tapers, singing.*

LADY F.: Worm and snail, sing lullabies

To dew her orbs upon the green:  
Those are pearls that were his eyes,  
Come not near our fairy queen.

With heigh! the doxy over the dale,  
Underneath the greenwood tree;  
Like a rat without a tail,  
Who is Sylvia, what is she?

But soft, but soft, aside! Here comes the King.  
*Enter the QUEEN, mobled.*

The trouble with this sort of approach is that it will not lend itself to the brisk or, indeed, coherent development of a dramatic *narrative*. The writer either gets hypnotically fascinated by a single obsessive idea (like the Gravedigger's stomach-ache) to which he must perforce devote whole Scenes and, possibly, even Acts; or alternatively he finds characters coming and going with immense speed but absolutely no relevance to the plot. One can, of course, get rid of a character quite easily:

GRAVEDIGGER: I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun. (*Dis.*)

\* dew] Dover Wilson: ? *show* (cf. 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven.'—Exod. xvi).

One can as easily bring a new character on. Any fool can write:

*Enter FOOL.*

FOOL: Marry, nuncle, where be now thy quiddits and thy quillets? I' the clout, i' the clout, sassa! Give the word. Hum!

*[Exit FOOL.]*

But it takes a genius of Shakespeare's own calibre to gull an audience of cultural Americans into thinking that such speeches have any bearing whatsoever on the action of the play.

The solution seems to be to select, for compression, only that particular aspect of the Shakespearean drama which Shakespeare himself purposely confounded with every imaginable sort of confusion: expository, geographical, strategical, cognominal and so forth. I refer, of course, to the Historical Play—and especially to the Historical Play's Battle Scene, where characters of no conceivable relevance rush in and out announcing developments of doubtful

tactical value to bemused commanders. (The commanders' bewilderment, I imagine, must spring chiefly from the fact that an enemy-occupied objective so often bears the same name as one of the Dukes or Earls on their own side.)

*Tucket without. Enter, upon the walls, KING HENRY IV PART I and HASTINGS, in triumph with forces, drum, colours, Mayor, prentices and soothsayer. The Spanish fly.*

KING: Come, noble Hastings, rough Northumberland, Pembroke and Stafford, Dorset, Buckingham, You, Worcester, and my cousin Westmorland— 'Twas you that killed young Rutland, was it not, That day he overcame the Nervii?

Where is the post that came from valiant Oxford? Where is beloved Norfolk? Where is Monmouth? Where Hereford and Lancaster and Derby?

HASTINGS: Believe me, noble lord, I am a stranger here in Glostershire.



*'Why stand so close?'*

**KING:** Call for some men of sound direction—

Then saddle Surrey for the field to-morrow.  
Away with Oxford to Hames Castle straight;  
For Somerset, off with his guilty head!  
Go after, after, Cousin Buckingham,  
Through Alexandria make a jolly march,  
And my good Uncle Worcester will set forth  
To meet your father and the Scottish power,  
As is appointed us, at Shrewsbury.

**HASTINGS:** Somerset, Somerset, for Lancaster!

**QUEEN** (*aside*): For this clear speech Lord Hastings  
well deserves

To have the heir of the Lord Hungerford.

*Enter FIRST MURDERER.*

**KING:** Good or bad news, that thou comst in so  
bluntly?

**MURDERER:** Help, grandsire, help! My Aunt Lavinia  
Follows me everywhere, I know not why.

*Offers to stab KING. KING refuses offer.*

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

**KING:** Thou comst to use thy tongue; thy story  
quickly.

**MESSENGER:** Titinius' face is upward. He is slain.

**KING:** Oh, by whom?

**MESSENGER:** The Emperor and the Earl of Armagnac.

*Enter a SECOND MESSENGER.*

**KING:** What news on the Rialto?

**MESSENGER:** The Breton Navy is dispers'd by tempest.

**KING:** Carlisle, this is your doom.

*Enter a THIRD MESSENGER.*

What bloody man is that?

**MESSENGER:** My gracious sovereign now in Devon-  
shire—

**KING:** Liar and slave!

*Runs him with a bare bodkin.*

Speak, I charge thee, speak!

**MESSENGER:** As I did stand my watch upon the hill,  
That lies betwixt Philippi and this ground,  
I look'd towards Birnam and anon me thought  
The wood began to move.

**KING:** The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced  
loon—

Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.

*Sennet without. Enter the SENATE. Sennet within. Exit*

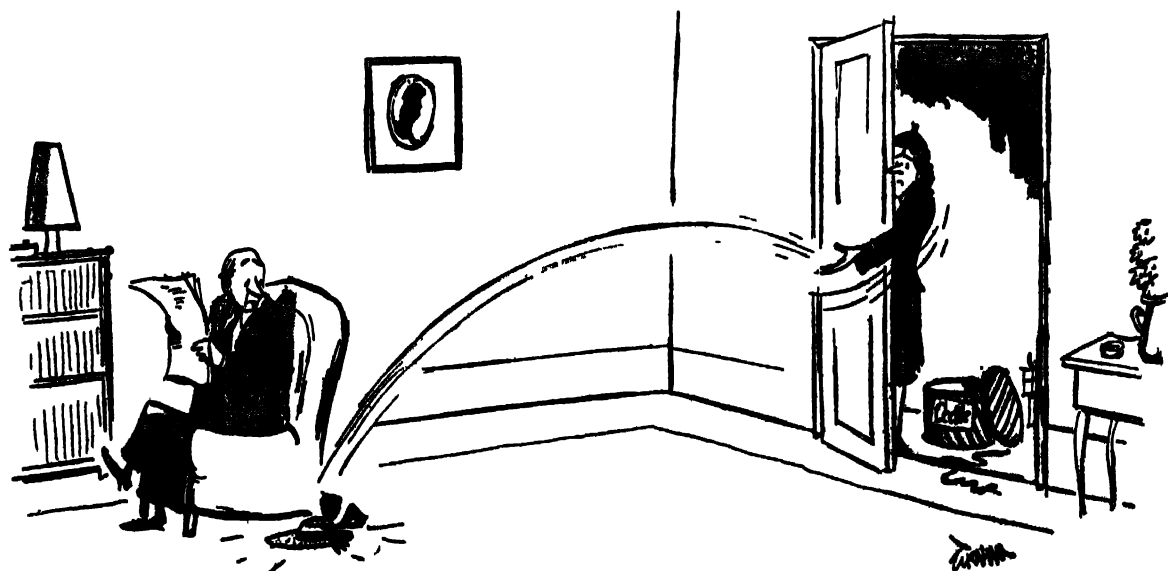
**KING, in pomp, on a chair. A piece is shot-off. Alarum.**

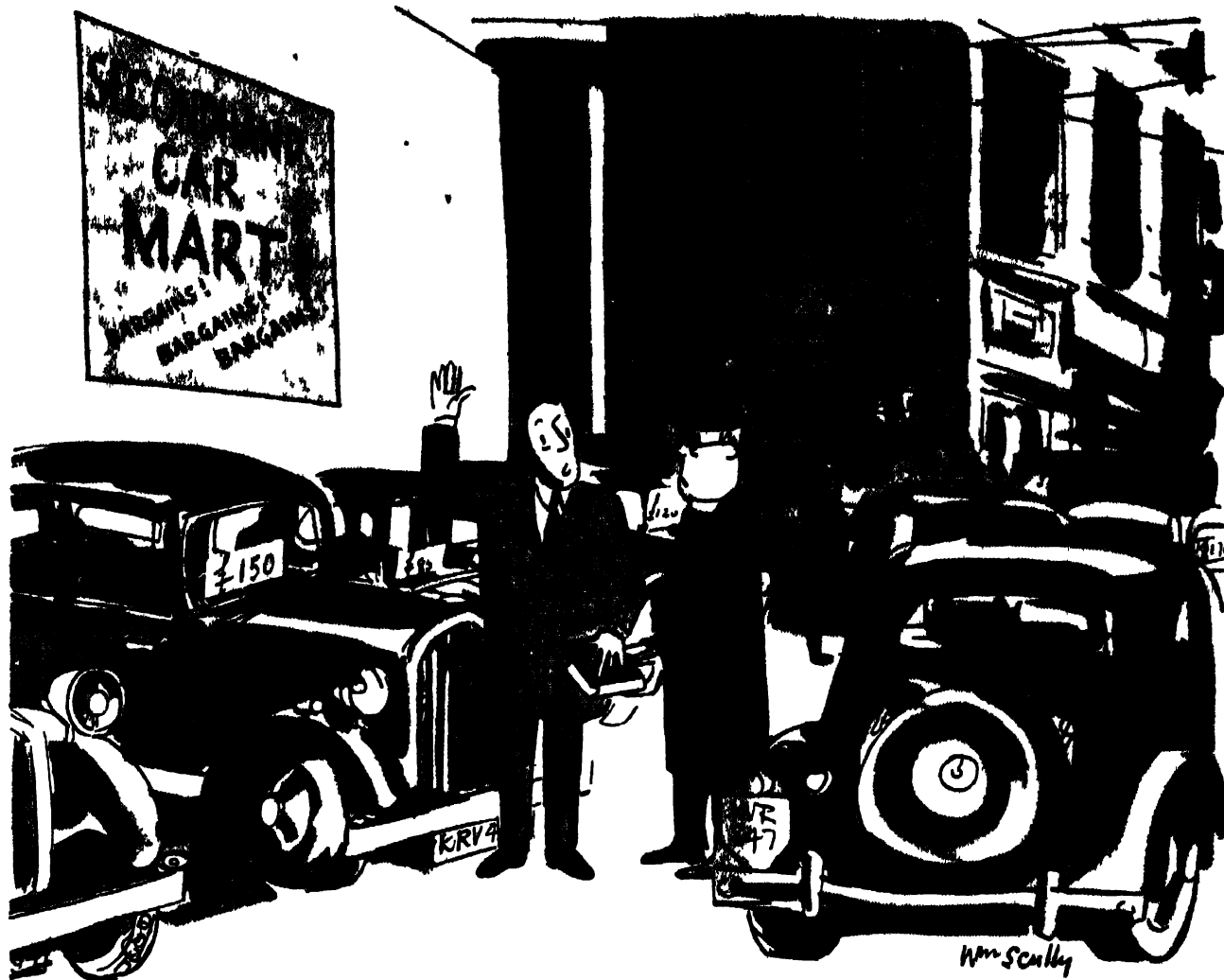
*Excursion. Tucket within, and:*

INTERVAL FOR TUCKING-IN WITHOUT.

Title? From a multiplicity of permutations, I select  
the euphonious '*Hambeline, the Moor of Tyre, or*  
*Much Ado About What You Will.*' Cast? Well, I sort of  
see Sir Laurence . . .

PAUL DEHN





## Railway Networks

ONCE I worked as a clerk in an office and I grew thinner and my suits fell to bits and I watched the seagulls out of the window. The months passed and I knew I had taken the wrong road. 'You're not paid to watch seagulls,' said the manager. In my spare time I went to Victoria Station and bought cups of tea and watched the trains. The ceiling of the station shook with the thunder of wheels, and men with fur collars and attaché cases disappeared in clouds of steam. There was a faint imported smell of sea, a

catch in the throat, a volley of shouts, and an explosion of children like fireworks. The Golden Arrow drew in. Out came the eternal over-wrapped exiles from operas and roulette, pampered ghosts from Anglo-French hotels, lovers, swindlers, actresses, impostors, believers, bores and magicians. But all that mattered to me was the gold and blue of the places they had been to, the singing names, like Leman, Maggiore, Garda, Ischia, Ibiza.

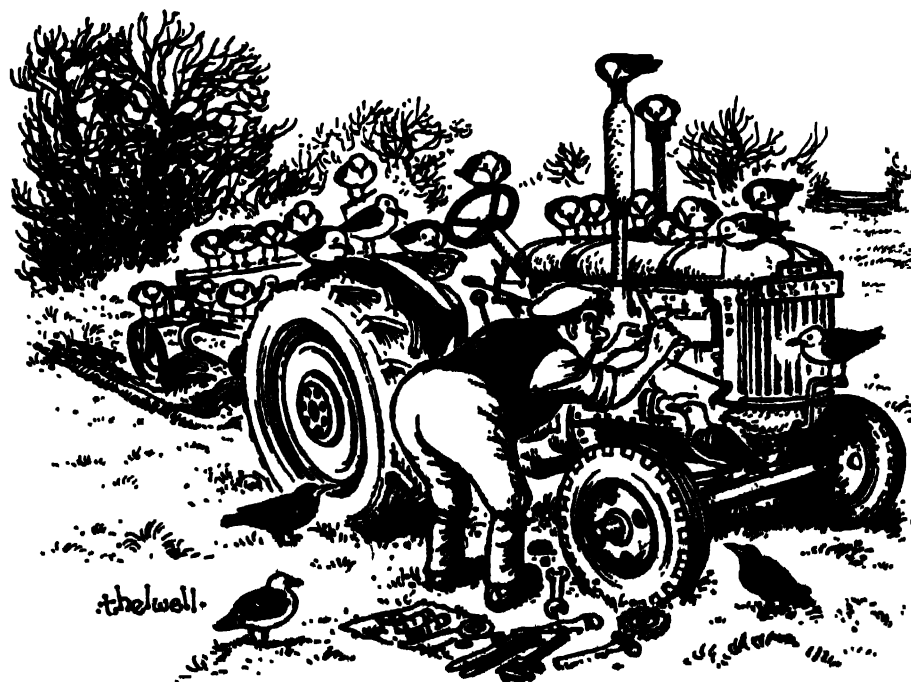
Eventually I joined a travel agency. I almost lived

in trains, pushing hordes of people round monuments, cramming them into cathedrals, and winking them out of gondolas. Once, on the Paris-Vallorbe run, my train split in two. Half my clients disappeared down a gradient. The runaway carriages reappeared half an hour later at Vallorbe station and were greeted by hysterical shouts, as though they had come back from Siberia. But the train didn't pull up. It puffed off busily in the general direction of Italy, and I found it quite impossible to control the pandemonium on the station platform. Even I, the courier, wasn't aware that this divided train was returning to another platform.

I lived in a world of smoke, station buffets, Customs offices and rattling corridors; the antiseptic rush through the Simplon tunnel; the gleaming run beside the lake of Geneva; carriages of priests, soldiers, Chianti and garlic between Pisa and Rome; and the eternal stolid caravanserai of British clients getting constipated from pasta and ruins. I was still a prisoner entangled in a web of questions, complaints and prejudices. But through the window, past the vacuum flask and the knitting needles, I could see the running rainbow feet of beauty.

After a time I began to weary of trains and to long for London. But I could not escape. The demon which had haunted me in the office and dragged me to Victoria Station to gape at the expresses would not release me. It was my living. Sleeping past Lyons, breakfast at the frontier, loving past Stresa, eating past the Apennines. Eventually I broke up a highly organized tour of Italy by running off with one of the clients, was sacked by the agency and took up writing.

A summer and a winter passed and London lay on my stomach like a lobster supper. I was making no money. The current was turned off, and I dreamed of the Continental railroads like swallows whose wings flutter in their sleep. Somewhere, someone was waving to me. 'You should be here!' Again I haunted Victoria Station. Then I paid a visit to another travel agency. 'I am a railway expert,' I said. 'Can you speak Spanish?' asked the manager. 'Certainly,' I replied. 'We are experimenting with a place called Sitges in the north of Spain. We would like you to take about fifty clients there from London. Would you be prepared to do that?' 'Yes,' I said. 'Be careful with them,' said the manager. 'Some of them are old ladies and not used to travel. You start in a fort-





night, and if you call in to-morrow I will give you the list.'

We went on the Newhaven-Dieppe-Paris route, and left for Port Bou from the Gare d'Austerlitz. So far it was an uneventful journey, except that four of the old ladies recognized me from my last Italian tour, and I could see them rustling up and down the corridors with scandal. The next morning we steamed into Cerbère, and I was smoked out of my carriage with questions. Do we change here? Is this Spain? Is Franco here? Shall we change our money? Can we use the lavatories in this station or would they arrest us? Can we get coffee? Tea? Aspirins?

Before I need answer all the questions the train slid through a tunnel and we arrived in Port Bou, Spain. Directly we got down on to the platform it was obvious that all the officials hated us on sight. Many of them were armed to the teeth. We were driven into a gloomy barrack-like Customs shed, our suitcases were wrenched open and the contents scattered right and left. One of my old ladies burst into tears. Have you any drugs, firearms, or pornographic literature? an official was asking her.

There were six ticket-windows operated by six dour, sadistic railway employees. When you presented a form to be stamped each one said 'Wrong window.' Finally, at the risk of being shot, I got out on to the Port Bou-Barcelona platform and made inquiries about my agency reservations. A very old man in a peaked cap with RAILWAY SERVICES written on it pointed at a carriage. 'They are there,' he said. The carriage was bursting with people. 'But I have fifty clients,' I shouted. The old man looked at me with terrible patient sadness. 'That which has to be . . .' he said and crept away.

Finally we arranged ourselves on the train. I stood next a plump Spaniard in the corridor who was looking out of the window at the embittered tourists flapping about the platform like intolerably harassed poultry. 'In an odd way it pays,' he said, offering me a cigarette. 'All of you foreigners, after this ghastly experience at the frontier, are expecting the worst from us. But when you find how friendly we are, and how much we hate our railways, it will seem all the better. Where are you going to?' 'I am taking fifty English people to Sitges.' 'Be prepared for the worst,' said the Spaniard, 'and beware of the tunnels.' He gave me details of the journey.

We reached Barcelona in the afternoon. Three of

my old ladies had fainted, and there were ten cases of diarrhoea. ('You should have told us about the water.') There were two trains to Sitges. One said 'Very Fast' and the other 'Highly Rapid.' I chose the Highly Rapid and chased my party into two or three amazingly empty carriages. There was another train which I had not noticed. It was called 'Supremely Quick.' This left almost immediately. We waited in our train, starving, for about an hour, while it gradually filled up. When it was obviously crammed it left for the next Barcelona station, Paseo de Gracia.

Here was a waiting cargo of fresh passengers. Women lay on the floor like threshed wheat, suckling babies. Aerated-water sellers climbed through a trellis of arms and legs and half the station got on to the train to say goodbye. At the next station the beggars were waiting, followed by the lottery sellers carrying dolls and bags of sweets.

An hour later, remembering what the Spaniard at Port Bou had advised me, I squeezed my way through the train and warned all my party to take down their luggage and put it on to the outside platform. 'The train only stops for a minute at Sitges,' I told them. In the middle of this operation we entered the first tunnel. The carriages filled with smoke and the lottery sellers, coughing with rage, stumbled over their dolls, aerated water rolled over the floor and pickpockets got to work. In all, there were nine tunnels and they were very long and the train was slow. Finally we came into the light, and the town of Sitges, white as ice-cream, glimmered into view.

We poured out of the carriages, the fists of the lottery sellers pistoning through the windows, grappling with a cascade of luggage. Suddenly, with horror, I remembered I had placed some old ladies on the front carriage. I could see no sign of them. I ran forward to the platform behind the engine.

They were there. Five of them. Their faces were quite black. From one desperate feathered hat I could distinctly see a little spiral of smoke ascend, like the aftermath of Red Indian massacre. 'This is Sitges,' I said in a small voice. But they just looked at me. And the train, with no warning, as much as to show that it *was* a train, made off towards Valencia.

I am back at Victoria Station again. Meet me at Platform Eight.

ANTHONY CARSON

# A Wreath of Sad Stories

## *Woven from the Leaves of Life*

TEEN-AGED, and a resident of Malvern, Worcestershire, Thomas Blore read some books, and they had stuff in them about Circassian girls, many of them dancers. They were of singular beauty, intelligence, and skill, and plus this they were gloriously feminine; passionate and yet submissive; and, if you liked, they would play soft music to you while you reclined on something.

Older, Blore met a lot of girls, but none of them Circassians. Then he went to a party in Paris and he saw a girl across the room, and he said to a man 'Who's that girl across the room?' And the man said 'She's a Turk. Or rather, really, she's a Circassian, actually.' Blore was most awfully bucked, and addressed the girl, and soon married her. He was particularly bucked at the recollection of a comment by S. Freud to the effect that happiness is the fulfilment of childhood desire.

He brought her back to England immediately, and she said that, of course, she did not intend to let marriage interfere with her career. Blore said perhaps she could appear in cabaret, or did she mean ballet?

She said 'Dancing? Faugh!' And it turned out that she was a qualified solicitor, and before marriage had

been admirably referred to as the Benson, Benson, Benson, Benson and Bloom of Ankara South. She said a true daughter of progressive, modern Turkey had no time for dancing, and progressive girls from modern Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and adjacent areas had no time for it either.

Blore, reclining, said 'What about soft music?' She said 'Are you anti-democratic or something? And please don't sprawl when I speak to you. Sprawling is not so progressive.'

She got enrolled as a solicitor in London, and took her meals out with the other solicitors, who called her Cassie. When she got home she was too tired to do any housework, and had to read Toynbee in bed for relaxation. 'In modern Middle East,' she said, 'we find Toynbee not very serious. But he is quite amusing, don't you find?'

When she divorced Blore she conducted her own case, and got an alimony award which crippled him for life.

## II

The setting sun of yet another day was casting long shadows across the porch of the old homestead in Peoria, Kansas, as Hiram Hendrick, moved by the wonder of it all, vowed—not for the first time—always to be worthy of his heritage. He was clean and keen, and he got to be a Captain in the Army. Then they made him assistant Military Attaché in a foreign capital, and the setting sun of yet another day still was casting long shadows across the Chancellery of the Legation in this foreign capital as Hiram, moved by the wonder of it all, vowed never to do anything he would be ashamed to discuss with the people in the War Office of the country to which he was accredited. In particular, he swore never to let his country down, or bring a blush to its cheek, by engaging in espionage and getting expelled *à non grata*.

'Thing about Hiram,' the boys would say in days to come, as they sat 'yarning' round the camp fire in the Union Club, while elk and moose sought their scanty fodder in the surrounding wilds, 'he was always absolutely *grata*.'

The sun set over and over again, and was doing so



'Are you sitting comfortably? . . .  
Then I'll begin . . .'



in Washington, D.C., when a man from the Pentagon said to the Minister of the country where Hiram was *en poste*, 'How do you find Hiram Hendrick these days? Is he still as *grata* as ever?'

'More *grata* than ever, if anything,' responded the diplomat. 'I'd say he's one of the grataest men in your service.'

'No suspicion,' queried his military interlocutor, 'of his using his diplomatic immunity as a cover for espionage, obtaining unauthorized information through unofficial channels, or by the bribery and corruption of such of your nationals as may be in possession of important military secrets? No hint of anything improper, likely to lead to a peremptory request on your part for his immediate withdrawal?'

'None,' said the Minister.

So a week later Hiram was recalled to Washington and transferred to the command of a military canteen in a little-known area of northern Nebraska.

### III

With all the fresh fervour of her eager young heart, little Clorinda dreamed childish dreams, and at her mother's knee prayed and prayed to become awfully,

awfully rich, so as to have a series of men at her feet, begging her to marry them.

Then an uncle who had gone out to São Paulo, Brazil, died there, and cut up for a matter of a cool six million, four of the coolest being for Clorinda, and she married a man called Fuzeley, who insulted her publicly at the reception after the wedding, to show his independence and emphasized that, though penniless, he was in no way intimidated or inhibited by her great wealth.

To underline his point he later bought jewellery for other girls and sent Clorinda the bills. When she divorced him he said that had she not lived like some exotic flower, a hothouse plant sheltered by her riches from wholesome contact with life's realities, she would have been more broadminded.

Her second husband, who was Peter Athrop-Thurze, was brutally rude to her at the reception after the wedding, to show that, though penniless, he was not intimidated by her great wealth. He said she had better give him half her money right away so that he could start a business of his own, not wishing to have his friends suppose he was living on her.

The business he started was a night club in New

York, and he said she had better remain in London. Otherwise, if she came to New York with him, people would say she didn't trust him out of her sight with the money, and he would be humiliated in the eyes of his friends and business associates.

After two years of separation she divorced him in Reno, and he said you could never trust these rich girls, they were spoiled and fickle, not knowing their own minds from one minute to the next.

Mewd, who married her some months later, said at the reception after the wedding that the unequal distribution of the world's goods, the existence of huge unearned incomes, maddened and revolted him, and that he was often disgusted at himself for allowing himself to become involved with a rich woman who had never done a hand's turn of decent work in her life, and probably wouldn't know how to take a bus across London if she had to, and she would have to pretty soon, because the masses weren't going to stand for this sort of thing for ever,

and she needn't think they were, and they wouldn't be fobbed off much longer with crumbs, either.

He gave up his job, saying he could not stomach the notion of taking work out of the mouths of fellows who needed it more than he did, and he sat at home all day in a silk dressing-gown, saying the mere, grotesque, utterly unnecessary size of the house, more like some filthy luxury hotel than a sensible home, nauseated him.

He had become, he yelled, nothing but a spiv and a parasite. He commenced drinking heavily, and when Clorinda divorced him, a couple of years later, he said that what she and all her kind were, were ruthless juggernauts, little recking of the havoc of a human life.

## IV

The educational inspectors, or whoever they were, asked Toby Neasworthy what he wanted to do when he grew up, and he said he wanted to enjoy a life of almost unparalleled luxury, extravagance and power, comparable only to that of the Roman Emperors. They gave him good marks for clear thinking and vision, and asked how? He said he was going to get to be boss-man of a huge circulation newspaper somewhere, which would lash out fearlessly, hit hard, and pillory when necessary.

Also it would expose scandals in high places and low, unafraid to tear aside veils which too long had concealed this or that. Everyone would read it to see who or what had gone off the rails now, and Neasworthy would enjoy a life of almost unparalleled luxury, extravagance and power.

He became boss-man of such a paper, and from then on was forced to live in an outer suburb with his aunts, because it would be so awful if the boss of this paper got breathed on by any scandal himself. When he travelled by train he had to take two tickets in case he lost one and they hauled him up for trying to travel without paying his fare.

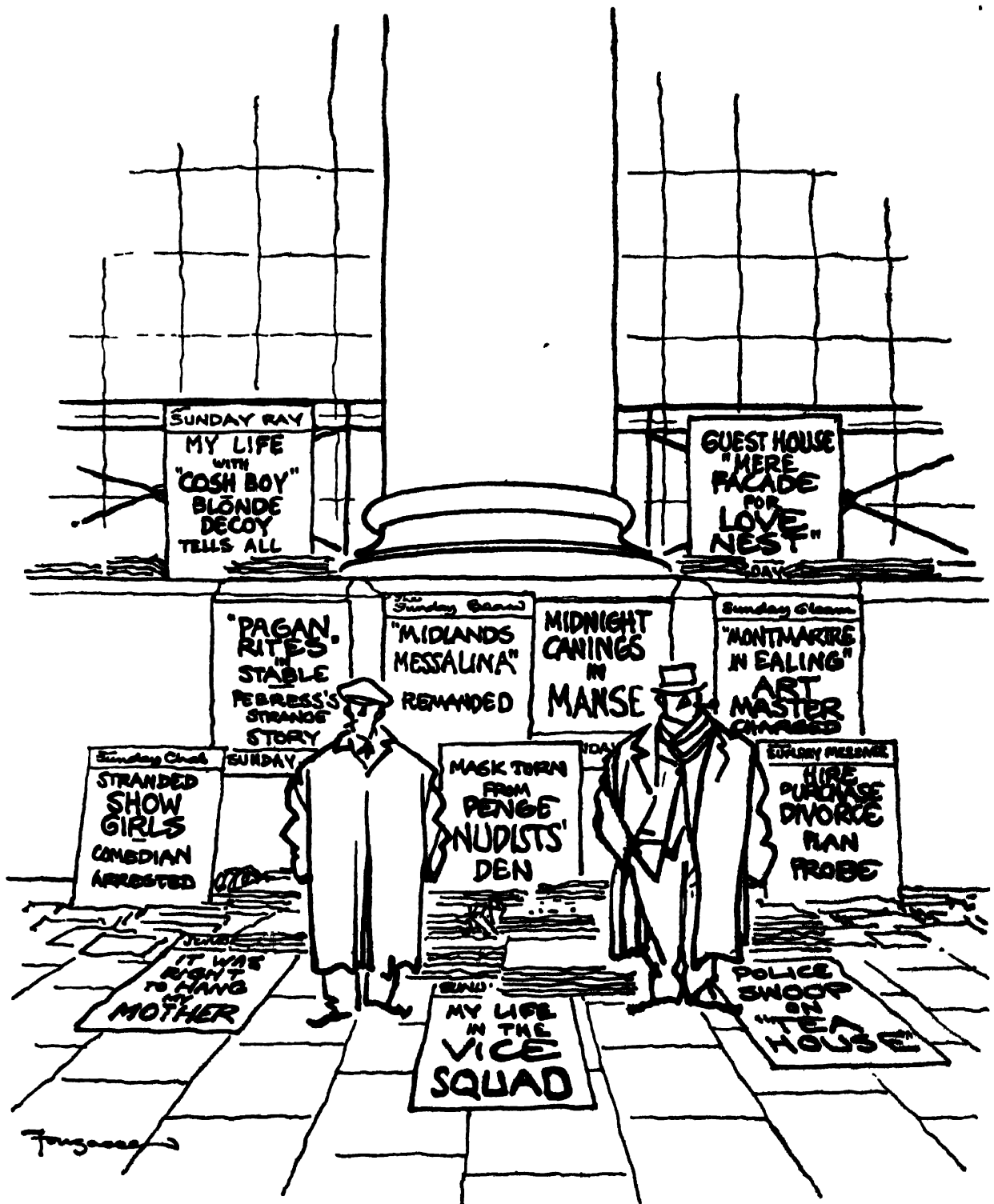
When he finally retired he went off to have an orgy and found he had forgotten how.

## V

Paynham-Bridges worked hard for years to get elected to Parliament so as to be in a position to do the country a tremendous lot of good.

CLAUD COCKBURN





*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exodus, xx, 8.*

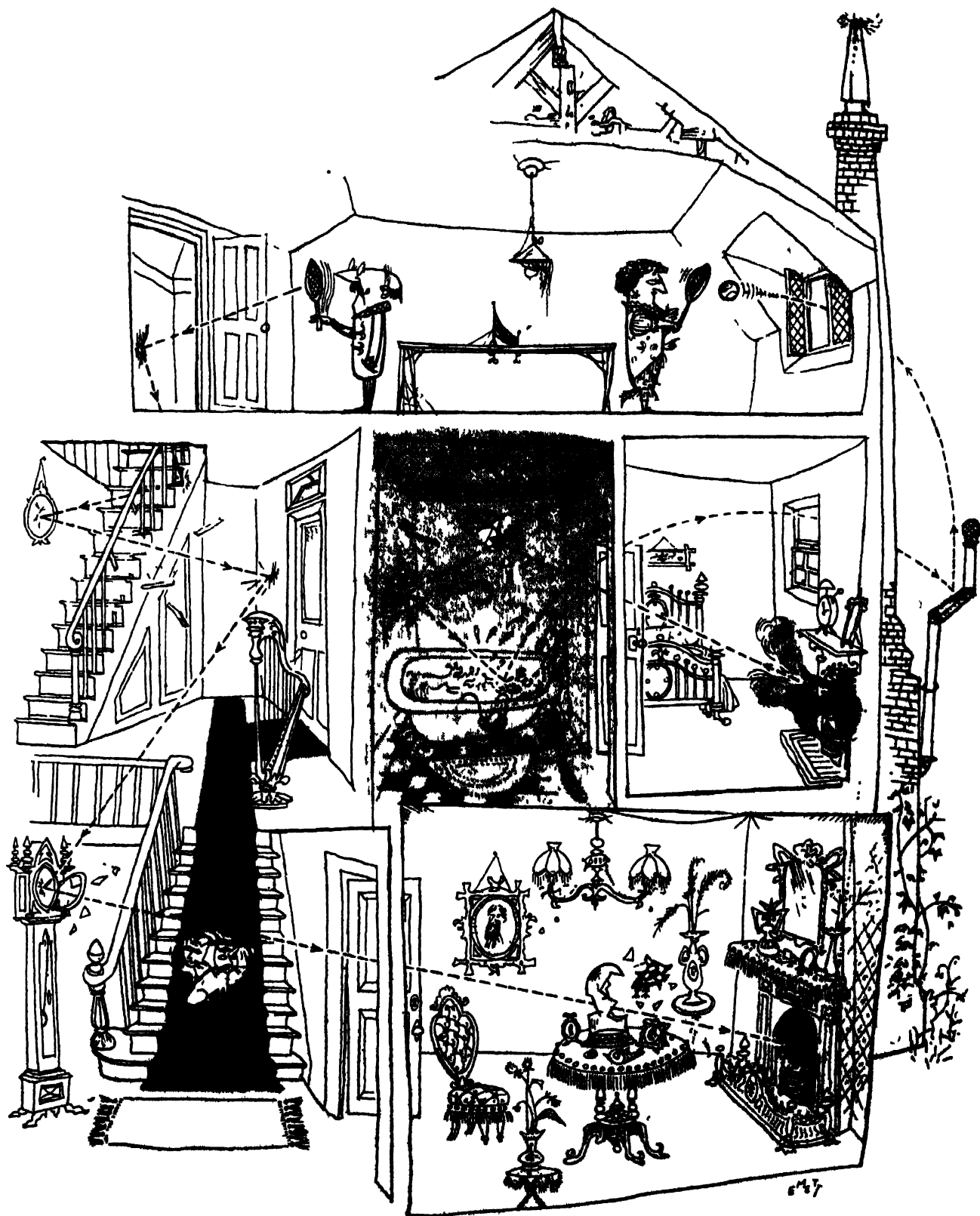
## The Snail's on the Thorn

I WAS only a simple Birmingham boy from a humble Methodist street,  
And the path I chose was straight and close, and held no snares for my feet;  
For the world, I guessed, was a viper's nest from what I could see from home,  
Where the bad found cheer in women and beer, and the good found refuge in Rome.  
But my very striving led me astray (which is often the way it goes),  
For I wrote on *What is Wrong with the World* in strong revivalist prose,  
And the next I knew I was off to Peru with a case and a palm-beach suit,  
And twenty-eight days of foreign ways, and Birmingham not *en route*.

That was twenty-eight days ago (and how quickly the time has sped),  
And I feel no doubt I should set about unsaying the things I said:  
For I thought there were few things one can do and a thousand things one can't,  
But I met a man in the Yucatan who gave me a different slant;  
And I thought desire a consuming fire that needed a strong corrective,  
But I met a peach on Waikiki Beach who put the thing in perspective;  
And I saw a lot of delightful spots, and found much cause for content;  
There was much to do, and the sea was blue, and the sun was warm, and I went  
In France well-dined, in Spain well-wined, in Norway gorgeously girlid;  
And I couldn't see for the life of me that much was wrong with the world.

But the essay's there, and fair is fair, and the only thing I can do  
Is write to the guys who gave me the prize and tell them it isn't true.  
For the urge to truth is a fearful thing, and can make the cagiest rash,  
And when all is done, I've had my fun, and they didn't pay me in cash.  
I have long-term dates in a dozen states which dames will keep with delight  
And offers of work from a wealthy Turk and an aged Israelite;  
And thanks to a man in Isfahan who taught me how I should pack  
I brought in enough negotiable stuff to pay four passages back;  
And the call is strong, and life is long, and the prizes of life are sweet,  
And the only thing in the world that's wrong is a narrow Birmingham street.

P. M. HUBBARD



# Six Valiant Bulls

DEAREST AUNT MAY,—You will never guess what happened to me yesterday, which was Ascension Day, besides being my birthday! I met our new postman at the front door and collected your 'Now you are 11' birthday card—thanks awfully! He was a young man with very long hair, and wanted to know what the card meant. So I told him. Then he asked if I was acquainted with the foreign family Esk. I said 'No, but show me the letters, please!' and they were all for father, ten of them—'William Smith, Esq.'—the postman had had them for a week! So we were both very pleased. Then I mentioned that Señor Colom was taking me to the bullfight for a birthday treat, and his face lighted up like a Chinese lantern. I asked 'Are they brave bulls?' and he said 'Daughter, they are an escandal!' and I asked 'How an escandal?' And he explained that Poblet the senior matador, had written to his friend Don Ramon, who had a bull farm near Jerez and was supplying the six bulls for the fight, to send him underweight ones, because he wasn't feeling very well after grippe and neither were the two other matadors, Calvo and Broncito; and he'd pay Don Ramon well and arrange things quietly with the Bull Ring management. So everything was fixed; until the new Captain-General of Majorca, who's President of the Ring and very correct, went to see the bulls as they came ashore. He took one look and said 'Weigh them!' So they put them on the scales and they weighed about half a ton less than the proper weight. So he said 'Send them back at once and telephone for more.' The second lot had just arrived by steamer. The new postman told me that they were

a disaster, and looked like very especial dangerous insects.

My friend Señor Colom is really a music critic, but that position is worth nothing, only a few pesetas a week; he gets his living from being a bull critic. A regular matador earns about two or three thousand pounds a fight, so his agent can afford to pay the critics well to say how much genius and valour he has, even if he hasn't.

Anyhow, Señor and Señora and I went, and the American fleet was in port and two American sailors sat next to us. It seems that the Captain-General had measured the bulls' horns himself and told the herdsman: 'When these beasts are dead I will measure their horns again. If they have been shortened and re-pointed, someone will go to prison.' Then he had checked the pics to see that they didn't have longer points than is allowed, and also sent a vet to see that nobody gave the bulls a laxative to make them weak. So it was going to be fun.

The Captain-General was in the President's box and after the march-past he waved his handkerchief and the trumpets blew and the first bull was let loose. He was a great cathedral of a bull, and rushed out like the Angel of Death. But when the cape-men came out and began to cape him there was a sudden growl and loud protests and everyone shouted '*Bizgo! Bizgo!*' which meant that the bull was squint-eyed and wouldn't answer to the cape. So the Captain-General sent the bull away, and Poblet, who should have fought it, gave a nasty grin, because there were no substitute bulls. One had got drowned when he slipped off the gang-plank of the steamer, and another had got horned by a friend. The Captain-General looked furious.

The next bull was very fierce, and the cape-men ran for their lives behind the shelters. One of them couldn't quite get there, so he dashed for the wooden wall and shinned up and escaped into the passage behind. The bull jumped right over the wall after him and broke a news-photographer's camera and spectacles, and gave him an awful fright. The crowd laughed like anything. Then the trumpets blew again and 'in came the cavalry,' as Señor Colom always calls the picadors. The bull went smack at the first horse before the peon who led it had got it into







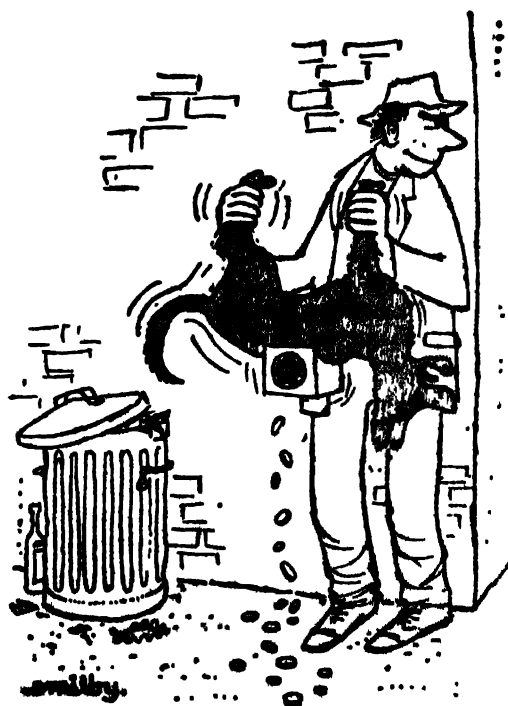
position, and knocked all the wind out of its body. The picador was underneath kicking with his free boot at the bull's nose. One of the two American sailors fainted, and his friend had to carry him out. Four more American sailors fainted in different parts of the ring; they are a very sensitive class of people.

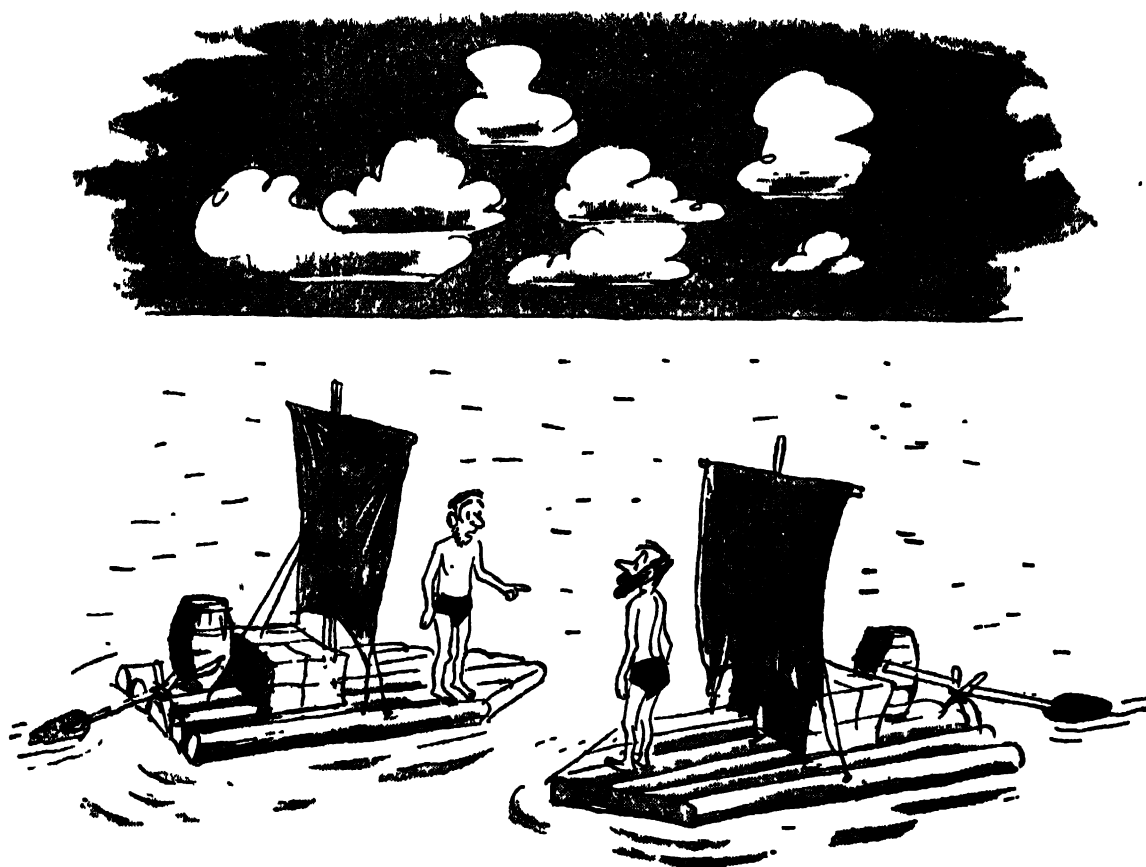
This bull was Broncito's. Broncito is a gipsy and engaged to Calvo's sister. He is very superstitious, and that morning had met three nuns walking in a row, and told Calvo that he wouldn't fight. Calvo said 'Then you will never be my brother-in-law. Would you disgrace me before the public? Would you have me kill your bulls for you, as well as my own? I don't like them any more than you do.' So Broncito promised to fight. Well, the picador wasn't hurt, they never are. The cape-men drew the bull away and the peons got the horse up again, and it seemed none the worse. And the picadors did their work well and so did the banderilleros. But Broncito was trembling. He made a few poor passes, standing as far away as he could, and then offered up a prayer to the Virgin of Safety, the one who saves matadors from death by drawing the bull away with a twitch of her blue cape. The bull happened to be in the right position, standing with his legs apart, so Broncito lunged and actually killed it in one. The public was furious because he hadn't played the bull at all, hardly, and the play is what they pay to see.

The third bull was Calvo's and Calvo was terribly valiant because he was so ashamed of Broncito. He made dozens of beautiful passes, high and low, also veronicas and some butterfly passes which everyone but Señor Colom thought wonderful. He had known the great Marcial Lalanda who invented them, and said that Calvo's were both jerky and ungenial; though, of course, he couldn't write that for his paper. Calvo killed after two tries and was rewarded with

both ears. His chief peon cut off the tail too, and gave it to him, but the Captain-General had signalled only for the ears, so the peon got fined 500 pesetas for presumption.

After the interval, with monkey-nuts and mineral water, it was Poblet's turn again. His bull came wandering in very tranquilly, had a good look round and then lay down in the middle of the ring. After a lot of prodding and taunting of which he took no notice, they had to send for a team of white and black oxen, with bells, who came gambolling into the ring and coaxed him out again. Do you know the story of





*'What are you trying to prove?'*

Ferdinand the Bull? It ends all wrong. Bulls like Ferdinand don't go back to the farm to eat daisies. I'm afraid they get shot outside the ring by the Civil Guard, like deserters in battle.

The public was getting impatient. It booed and cat-called like anything, but the fifth bull (Broncito's again) was a super-cathedral; soap-coloured and with horns like an elephant's tusks. Broncito was sick with horror, and when both the horses had been knocked down before the picadors could use their pics, and only one banderillero had been tall enough to plant his pair of darts well, he went white as a sheet. He pretended to play the bull but it chased him all over the place and the crowd roared with laughter and made rude jokes. So he shook his fist at them and called for the red *muleta* and sword and then, guess what! He *murdered* the bull, with a side-pass into his lungs instead of properly between the shoulder-blades. There was an awful hush from the

Spaniards, who couldn't believe their eyes—it was like shooting a fox; but tremendous cheers came from the American sailors, who thought Broncito had been very clever. Then, of course, the cheers were drowned by a most frantic booing, and the Captain-General sprang to his feet and cursed terribly. The next thing was that two *guardias* marched Broncito off to prison.

The last bull was easily the best of the six and Calvo was more anxious than ever to show off. He wanted both ears *and* the tail *and* the foot (which is almost never given), and when he came to play the bull he dedicated it to the public and did wonderful, wonderful, fantastic things. There's a sort of ledge running round the wooden wall which helps capmen when they scramble to safety. He sat down on it, to allow himself no room to escape from a charge, and did his passes there. Afterwards he knelt and let the bull's horns graze the gold braid on his chest. And did several *estupendous* veronicas and then sud-

denly walked away, turning his back to the bull, which was left looking silly. Calvo had waved all his cape-men far away and the crowd went wild with joy. But some idiot threw his hat into the ring, which took the bull's attention from the *muleta*, and Calvo got horned in the upper leg and tossed up and thrown down. Then the bull tried to kill him. I don't know how many more sailors fainted; I was too busy to count.

Suddenly an *espontaneo* in grey uniform with long hair simply hurled himself into the ring and grabbed Calvo's sword and red *muleta* and drew the bull off. It was our sloppy new postman! And while peons carried Calvo to the surgery, he played the bull very valiantly and got apotheosistical cheers, louder even than Calvo's, and the Captain-General himself applauded, although the postman was committing a crime. Everyone expected Poblet to enter and finish off the bull, but Poblet had now also been arrested

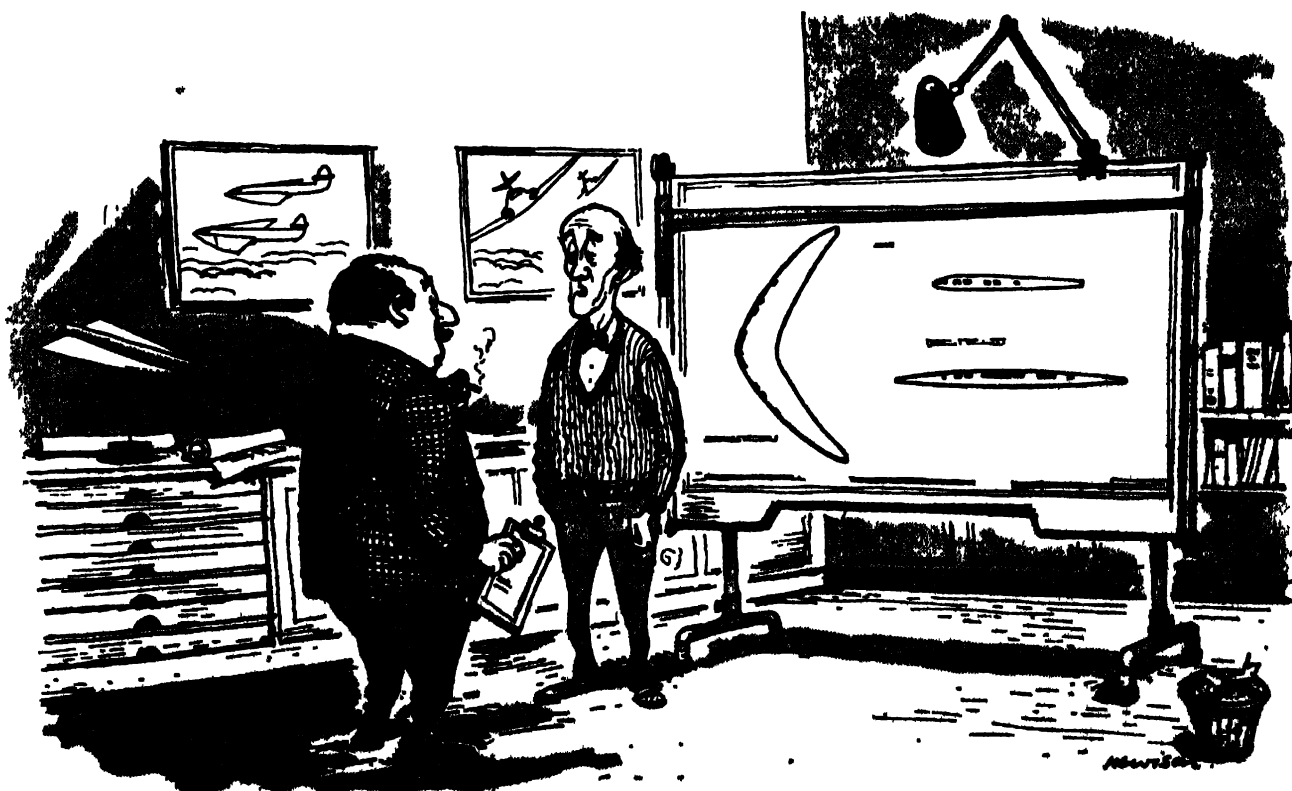
for insulting the lieutenant of the Civil Guard for insulting Broncito; so there was no other proper matador left. But Calvo petitioned that the postman should be allowed to finish off the bull, for having saved his life. The Captain-General consented and, when I waved madly, the postman recognized my yellow frock and rededicated the bull to me—me, Aunt May! Because it was my birthday and because of the Esq. And though the poor boy was rustic and quite without art, as Señor Colom said (and wrote), he managed to kill his enemy at the second try.

Then, of course, he was arrested too. *All espontaneos* are.

But the Captain-General let him off with a caution and a big box of real Havana cigars.

Ever your loving niece,  
Margaret Smith

ROBERT GRAVES



*'Its principal feature is that it requires fuel only for the outward journey.'*



## Junior Politics in the North

THE Rev. A. Campbell of the 'Wee Free' (Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland) rises to his feet and looking not only forward and up to the Convener but also back at the main body of County Councillors and sideways and down at the Independent (Communist) member with whom he is often in alliance, and then vertically down at his notes which are as usual bigger than anyone's, including, as they seemingly must, documents no-one else has ever seen, perhaps not even had access to—and using the full leverage of this possibility in the silence, he returns his gaze at last to the Convener and there fixes it with *renseigné*, ominous bile.

But his voice is sweet—lilted English and quiet as temptation. It is incredible such siren's, neck-prickly sound can emerge from the long, deprecatory mouth beneath eyes of wet grey granite of an Inverness pub-shut, Sunday wall.

'But Mist-er Confecener,' he says, and we all shudder with delight and terror as though our feet

were being nibbled by a cobra, 'apart from the consideray-tion of the Sabbath—is it right that the ferryman at Altnahulish should work seven—seven—days a week?

'IS IT RIGHT?'

The surprise peroration of three shouted words makes us blink. When we focus again the minister has disappeared. He has apparently fallen through the floor and is already on his way to a Higher Tribunal by Underground, for where he was, high above all, there he no longer is.

In fact he has just sat down. But so suddenly as to give no-one a chance not to be superstitious. There is mumbling and craning of necks. No! Good—there's himself, on a chair like our own selves.

The Convener is an old hand at the sixteensome and he waggles his head in appreciation of the point made and at the terrible possibilities of litigious support which may lie in the minister's bundle of pamphlets and in the long head of the Independent

member beside him, like the minister's shadow were it not his conviction the devil didn't have one. And now he is speaking—but is it possible he wishes to be understood? Like in a man about to play the bagpipes, the preliminary drone is soothing and on one note but always fraught with the possibility of departure: the previous ferryman at Altnahulish and the statute by which he was appointed in 1927 . . .

The eyes of even the initiated begin to film over as though subjected to a Buddhist rite in Dutch. They breathe deeper, and adjust the crutches of their cloth and new bits of skin to the buttocks' heavy bone.

Now it is the daughter of the previous ferryman who had helped him and been included in the agreement with the wartime council of which he had the honour to be the convener and so was in a position . . .

'Mis-ter Confeneer.' Surely the minister has a spring in his trousers to be up in such a trice. 'I ask the chentlemen here present what they are going to do about it NOW. Because IS IT RIGHT?'

Again he vanishes.

The Convener now looks hopelessly out over the hall and—is it our imagination?—the County Clerk is addressing him at length, although both men appear to be otherwise occupied, the one thinking, the other writing—and far apart.

Like a bell at last swung into contact with its clapper the Convener breaks forth resolutely, hinged to the last movement of the side of the County Clerk's mouth.

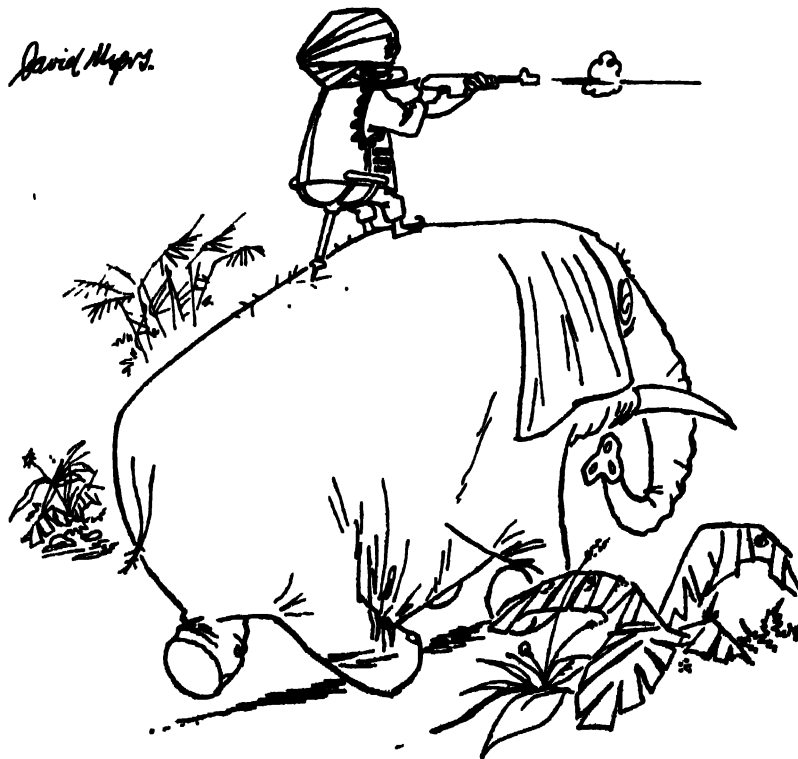
'Well, the Council cannot pay another ferryman. Isn't that right? We'll just have to close the ferry on Sundays. Is that what you want, Mr. Campbell?'

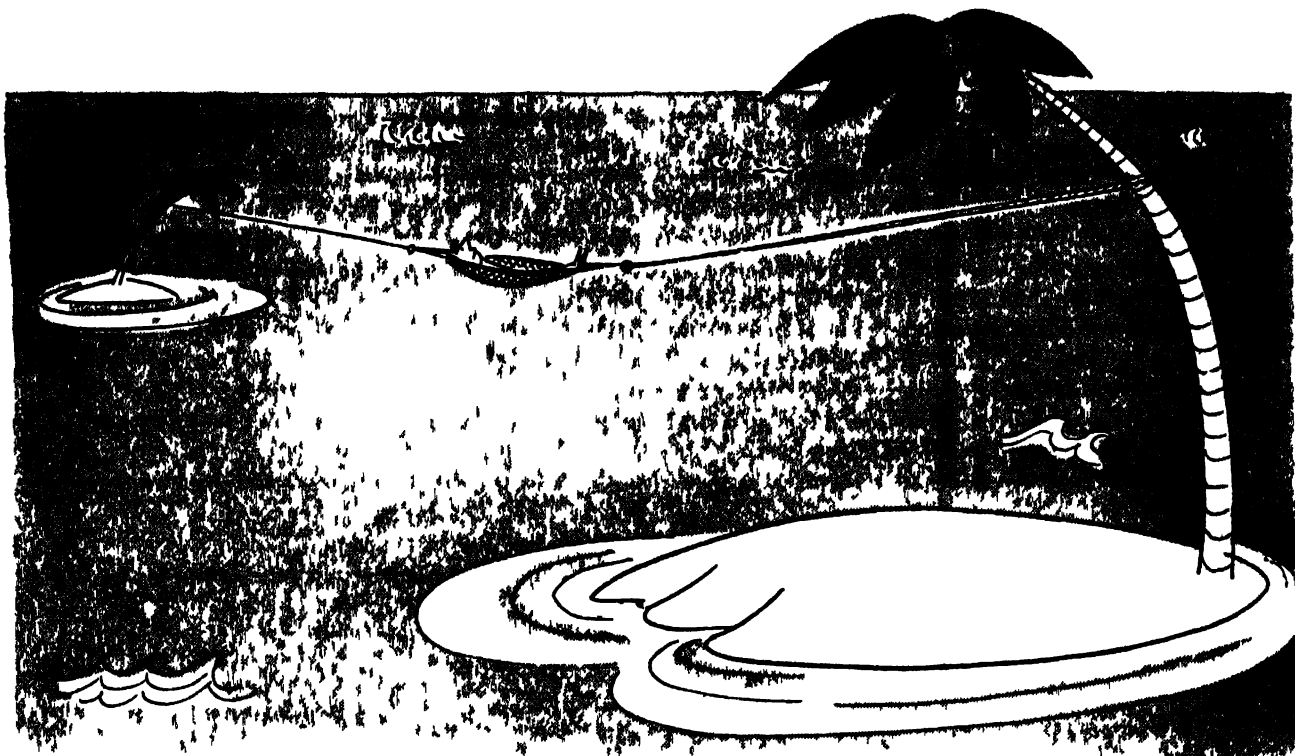
The minister is on his feet again. 'What I want . . . I . . . ?'

We look at the Convener more in sorrow than anger. Such obtuseness.

'It's what the law wants, Mister Confeneer—the By-laws 413b,' and the minister smacks his top pamphlet with his knuckles—clack——

'And.'





When will he go on. When . . . when . . .

As though going downstairs fast we have all trodden on a step that isn't there. We hurtle in the void. At last he fields us:

'—as though it were the *letter* of the law to be heeded that I cared. I'd like the electors of this county to know . . . it's the *spirit* that has been . . .'

The Convener draws a cow's head out of an already suggestive blob and the clerk continues to tot up rates.

'—DEFILED'—and once again the floor plays him false and he must be astride the Y.M.C.A. boiler.

But someone else is up. Who is he? Who is that man?

He is a councillor who lives on the nether as opposed to the hither side of the ferry. Some of his colleagues begin to remember him. Funny—the man had never spoken till now. He is large and it is odd to see him blush even though he merely says that he is in a position to know the ferryman and must point out for five months a year the man averaged only two crossings a day, both of them being himself.

The minister is on his feet.

'And in the season, Mr. Mackay, isn't it forty fares some days seven days running? Is this what you want us to approve?'

Addressed thus by name on his maiden sortie with black imputation attached, Mr. Mackay turns slowly from whisky-mottle to pure red like a lobster being cooked. Finally he subsides, wordless.

This, he must surely be realizing, is a mistake—fatal perhaps to his future and expenses.

The minister might have given him a right hook—and a referee be counting him out—seven, eight . . .

Mr. Mackay has realized. He's up.

'And in the season, Mr. Campbell. Bairns . . . bairns' (he looks around backwards like Mr. Campbell does) ' . . . from Glasgow—that have motored, isn't it . . . in a charity bus round by Tongue and Durness with the wind like a split in your breeks—and reechit the ferry hungry . . . '—here the man pauses, amazed at the knack once you get it, the ease—'hungry,' he revolves slowly, 'and tired . . .'

He begins to enjoy himself.

'Weary,' and balefully he leans forward to look, conspicuously, at the Rev. Campbell who, seated,

has inclined the plain of one foot-sole to inspect it, apparently, for the possible adhesion of Mr. Mackay.

'Weary on a Sunday night and unable to get across. Would you send them back by Tongue and Durness, would you . . . Mr. Campbell?'

The emotion is too much for Mackay. He is as abdominally Unionist as Mr. Campbell is gastrically Labour. It is an opportunity. He turns to the room and with one shout goes so far: '*He would.*'

The Rev. Campbell rises. He is possibly trembling. The Convener waggles his head and goes on with the cow, smiling. The 'Wee Free' eyes coat us all with guilt first—then settle down to Mr. Mackay.

Is it a sigh from Mr. Campbell's lips?—no—a word, and now another fluted on to the first, and all doveily-tailed with the third.

'A notice, Mr. Mackay—a little notice, here and there, by the wayside . . .'

The minister puts out a hand tenderly and our eyes stray to the point indicated, where sure enough there is a notice newly-painted which we are not surprised to have read out to us by the minister for the particular benefit of Mr. Backward Mackay: 'On Sundays the ferry at Altnahulish will be closed, isn't it . . . closed.'

Two chords. Finish. The minister remains standing, hand still out, sticking into the nose of P. Skene (Dalrievoch), who submits to being a notice demurely.

But it is too late. Mr. Mackay's eyes still born with the plight of hungry bairns in a watery cul-de-sac, night coming on. Even the bus is beginning to come to him heavy laden.

'And supposing, Mr. Campbell, the ferryman would be pleased to have the matter left to himself to decide. Is it the sabbath you're caring for or the man's rest. *Or what?*'

A quavering pipe of a man so bent-old as to remain invisible when standing says, and as he speaks he bows sideways in order to catch the eye of his only co-eval: 'I've been five times on that ferry this year and it was **ARL**ways the bittie girl that worked it. Not yet fourteen, Tam.'

Tam says 'Aye.'

There is the purposeful uproar of people who want a change of fun. Chairs grate. The Convener finishes the cow and shouts 'It's past twelve. We've got two hundred thousand pounds of public money to allocate before five, heh, heh, heh—unless you vote another meeting.'

Some are leaving because The Stag is open.

In the commotion the Rev. Campbell ensures that for one conspicuous moment he is the last to sit down or leave the subject: '. . . me ashamed of this body.'

On the far side of the hall Mr. Mackay sits larger than life, his eyes glazed with release, muttering, making noises of solidarity with himself, hurt by the spectacle of a minister turning back children from their supper. If somebody had told him, he wouldn't have believed it—and he living the other side of the ferry and a friend of Mackay Ferry who worked the thing on Sundays in the season most happily of all days, because then was there mostly people from far away and none so jealous as to demand a ticket when they paid their fare.

HUGO CHARTERIS

## Hymns Modern

I LOVE the hymns that put  
Two three-foot lines in front  
And then bring in an extra foot  
To give the third a bunt.

The first two are serene:  
Not so, alas, the third,  
Which trips the knife-edge path between  
The sad and the absurd.

With Latin prosody  
Their learned authors thought  
It right to elide an O or E  
To achieve the effect they sought:

Nor was their work the worse  
In that they had the nerve  
Their verbal order to reverse  
And verbs for rhymes reserve.

How simple was their search,  
Those staid, assured divines,  
Who buttressed an established Church,  
With weakly founded lines,

And still proclaim to-day,  
When faith has more to meet,  
The even tenor of their way  
In odd iambic feet.

F. M. HUBBARD

# For a Long Winter Evening

THE *Annual Abstract of Statistics* 1954, published by H.M. Stationery Office at one guinea, is a book that it is impossible to take up once you have laid it down. This explains why I read it lying on my stomach on one of the 224,000 settees manufactured in 1947 rather than sitting upright in my share of the one million, three hundred and forty-six thousand fire-side chairs produced last year.

Caution. The above figures should be used with reserve by anyone keen to draw graphs of domestic furniture trends in the post-war economy. Looking at Table 186 again, I see that the figures up to 1952 relate to deliveries of utility furniture only by firms of all sizes, whereas from January 1953 (*Note 1 to Table 186*) they are confined to deliveries by firms with more than ten employees engaged in the trade *except in the case of divans*, where deliveries from firms of all sizes continue to be included. Setting this against the fact that from 1949 (*Note 3*) the returns for divans do *not* include unupholstered metal divans, and bearing in mind that cane settees (if I understand *Note 5* aright) are shown under 'Woven fibre chairs' from 1950 onwards, it will be realized that only generalized conclusions can safely be drawn from the Table.

Nevertheless, my main position, viz. that the book is best read prone, remains unaffected. Prone but not prostrate. I cannot associate myself entirely with the chorus of lick-spittle praise from highbrow economists that has greeted this well-meant little volume. Sound, so far as it goes, it certainly is. The tonnage of halibut, to take an example at random, landed at English and Welsh ports in 1952 agrees very closely with my own estimate (one is a little surprised, in this connection, to find fish-hooks lumped in with needles in the Manufactured Goods section), and a quick check-up reveals no serious errors in the quantitative Table of Exports, though here again the exclusion of rubber bathing caps from the total of hats and caps exported *prior to 1937* to some extent militates against the enjoyment of the general reader. The figures for arteriosclerotic diseases, gastro-enteritis and deaths from fire or other hot substance are also well conceived and presented without fuss. The lay-out generally is good, the rules dividing columns of figures are as straight as the most captious critic could desire, and the Index has been carefully planned on an alphabetical basis from Absenteeism in Coal Mines to Zinc. This, one repeats, is a work-





manlike job *so far as it goes*. But it does not go far enough.

The qualification is an important one, the mischief deep-seated. In a publication that purports to record the state of the Realm, or at any rate is taken so to do by leader-writers, economists, accountants (and how their numbers have risen since 1948, to be sure), there is too much emphasis on material affairs, far too little on things of the mind. Take Religion. Twenty-three thousand persons, one notes, were employed in this profession at the end of May 1953. How many Methodists? What are the figures for Plymouth Brethren? One looks in vain for the answer. The *Abstract*, which does not hesitate to particularize fourteen separate branches of the Textile industry, attempts no break-down of religious employees. Of their products, no mention at all is made. There is not a column, not a figure, to indicate the number of sermons delivered annually up and down the country since 1935—statistics which, had they been available, might usefully have been compared with the total of convictions under the Vagrancy Acts for the same period. The case is worse with Writers, Astronomers, Philosophers, who must

be found (if anywhere) lumped together like so many fish-hooks under 'Other Professional and Business Services.' There is a lack of sympathy, a failure in breadth of vision here, that bodes ill for the future. The lifeblood of a nation does not consist entirely of ferro-alloys and unplasticized polyvinyl chloride.

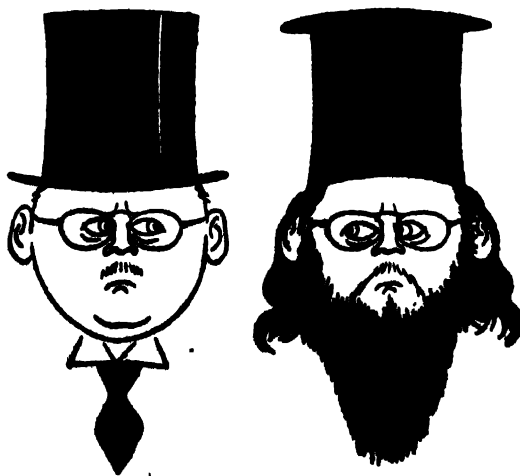
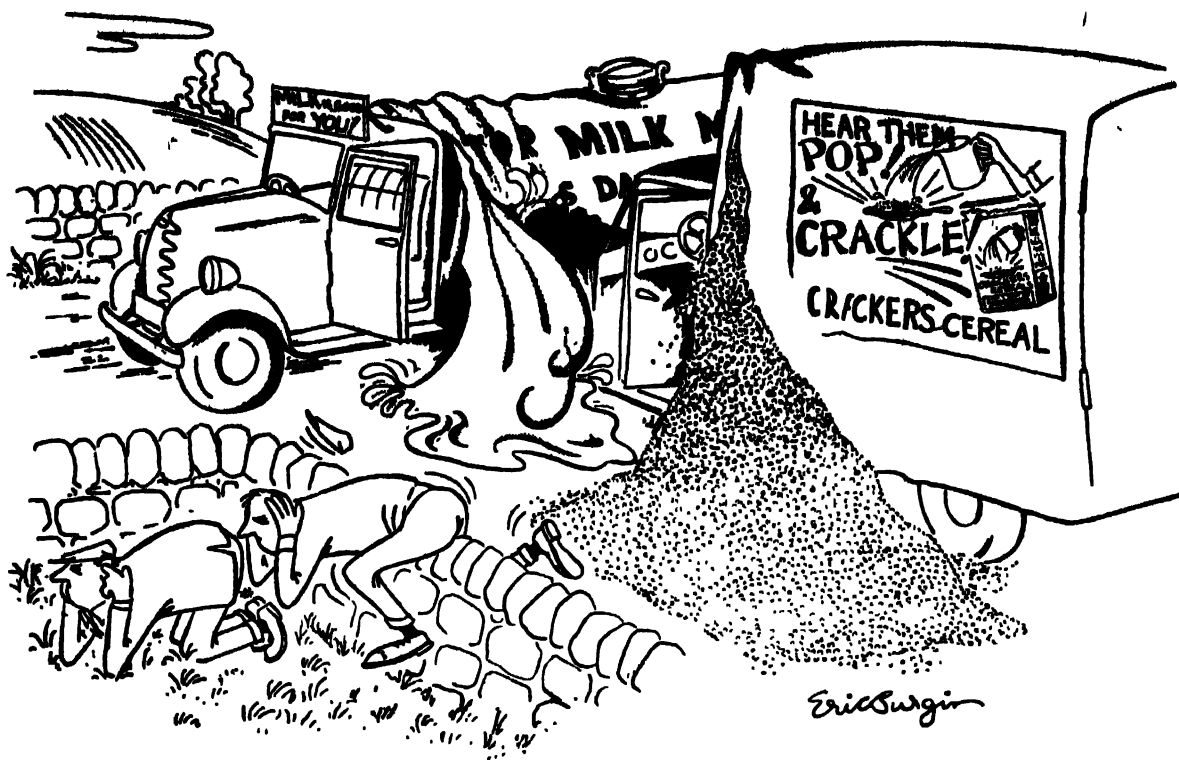
It will be objected that some limit must be set to the size of the *Abstract*. I reply that the figures for Percentages of Pupils taking Milk in Scotland could now be restricted to the last four years, instead of going back to 1938—thus making room, let us say, for the number of clichés (excluding 'within the framework of' after 1950) delivered by professional rhetoricians talking wholly for gain.

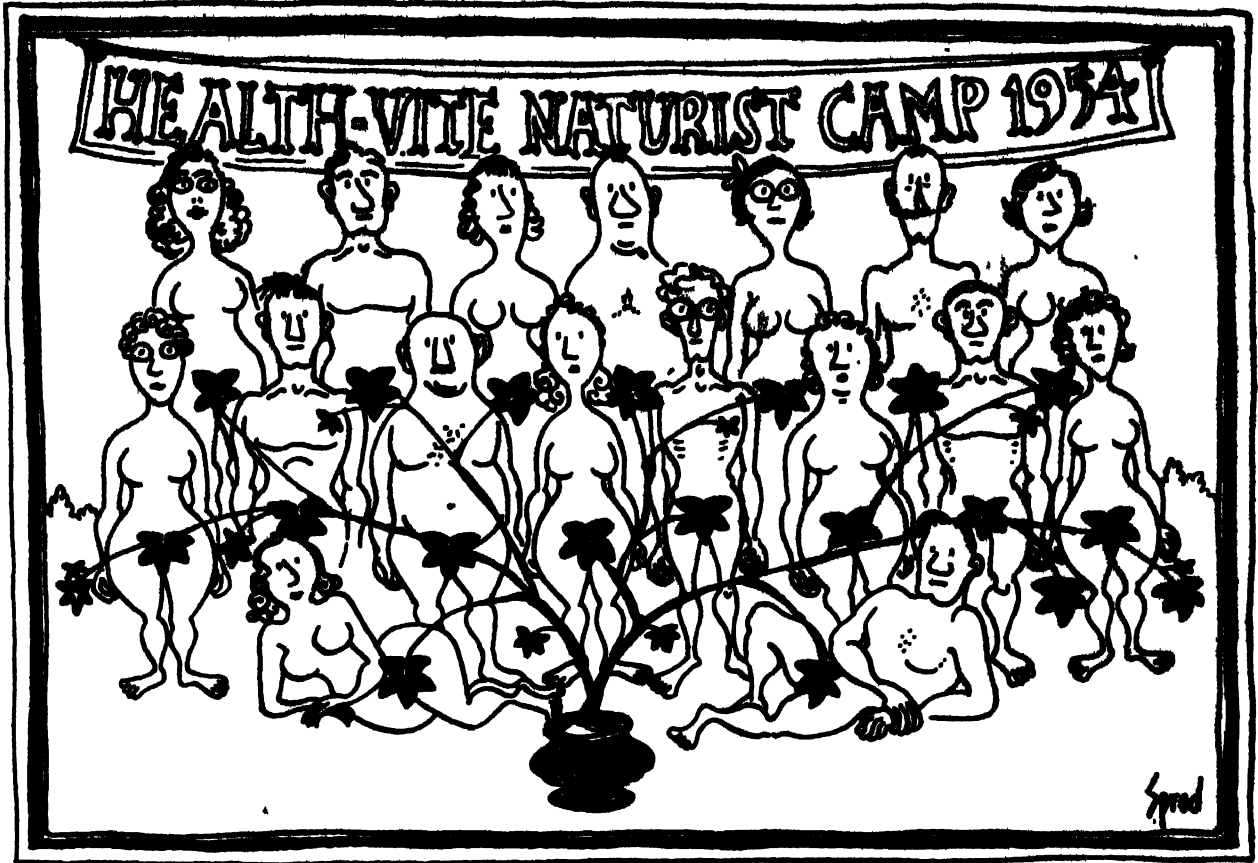
It is time the Central Statistical Office pulled its feet out of the slough of hot-pressed naphthalene and infants' outer-wear, other than gloves, bootees and bonnets, in which it has wallowed too long, and turned its attention to the not less vital products of heart and mind.

It might make a start next year by tabulating the number of man-hours spent annually in the collection of statistics.

H. F. ELLIS







## Long, Long Trail

Of all the spring and summer flowers which prink our meadows and prank our fields, what are lovelier or more widely distributed than the bright blossoms of the litter family? They vary in colour from the gay reds, purples and oranges of the chocolate wrapping to the more delicate and familiar hues of the cigarette carton. And few will have failed to notice the humble toffee paper peeping among the spring violets or the summer roses. No rambler by stream-side and meadow-bank but can have been delighted by the old buckets and motor tyres thrown into our trout rivers, and who is there who has not seen the fried-fish bag lying empty on the grass, the subtle grey grease stains dappling its surface and giving off a friendly smell of hot whale oil and candle grease in the fresher specimen?

The potato-crisp bag is a smaller variety of the same species, and though it is less immediately obtrusive, the bright colours of the advertising matter printed on its transparent tissue draw the attention of all nature-lovers. The torn newspaper is a more usual sight, and though from a distance it may not seem worthy of examination, a closer inspection will reveal old murders, forgotten pacts or the glimpse of some provocative torso, all reminders of the high state of our civilization. There is not space here to tell of the many other fascinating specimens of litter which adorn our glorious countryside—the crushed matchbox, the torn-up betting card, the football coupon and those more intimate personal articles which may be found near public footpaths.

Unfortunately there are busybodies and kill-joys

to-day who wish to see this rich profusion confined to the narrow limits of the litter-basket wherein all specimens are thrown higgledy-piggledy regardless of variety, in a way that is wholly unnatural. There are even those who go so far as to say that we should not distribute litter at all, but confine it to our pockets or picnic baskets. Let us remind ourselves that this is a free country and we can throw what we like, where we like and feel proud of it.

And now I want to send a special message to the Kiddiz. The Kiddiz are our future rulers, indeed they are our rulers, and everything must be done to educate them visually as well as socially and economically. Well here are some suggestions, Kiddiz, which teacher may not have told you.

(1) When you are going back from school, do not throw old exercise books and sweet and ice-cream wrappings on the pavement only. Tear them up a bit, and throw some on the pavement and the rest over fences into people's front gardens.

(2) When you are taken off in a luxury coach to

see some dull old cathedral, have your lunch in the cathedral by all means, but don't leave all your picnic remains in the nave, save some to distribute in the cloisters and the close.

(3) If you are eating oranges or bananas or ices, do not throw skins and papers from the coach into the town, where the public cleaning officers may see them and even remove them; wait until you get into the country and then throw them away.

(4) Smash your milk and cherryade bottles and leave the fragments on the road to puncture the tyres of bicyclists or on the beach to puncture the bare feet of pedestrians.

Finally let us remember that everything belongs to everyone and we can do exactly what we like with anything we see.

JOHN BETJEMAN

## GO EAST, OLD MAN

*Professor J. B. S. Haldane says he may take Indian citizenship  
'if the Indian Republic will have me.'*

HERE, where the act weighs less than the good will,  
And tarnished fames are touched with a new light,  
And the mere fact of coming east can still  
Confer a cachet on the convertite,

I, an old man needing a new respect,  
Full of an ageing spleen and finding now  
Hostility less galling than neglect  
And dead bays tetchy on a balding brow,

Have travelled eastwards, resolute to savour  
That spiritual respite I have sought  
Since I abandoned intellect in favour  
Of other less exacting modes of thought.

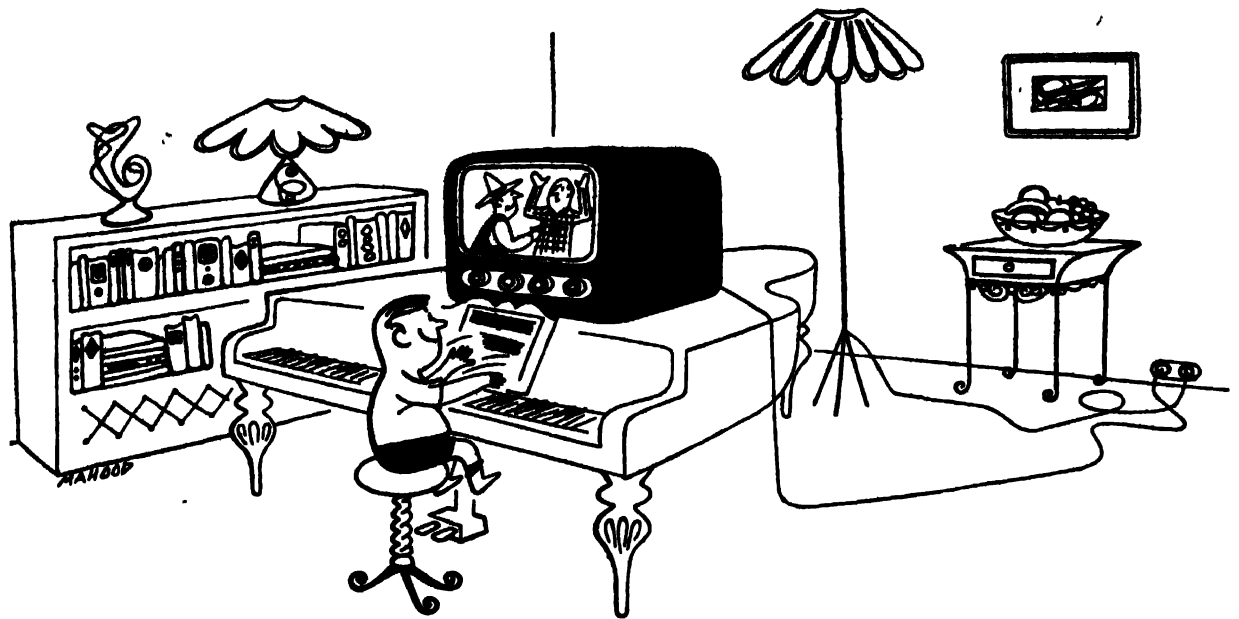
So, hardly flattering hosts too quickly swayed  
And courteous to refuse my proffered hand,  
I leave a west whose ways I have betrayed  
To woo an east I do not understand. ❧

P. M. HUBBARD

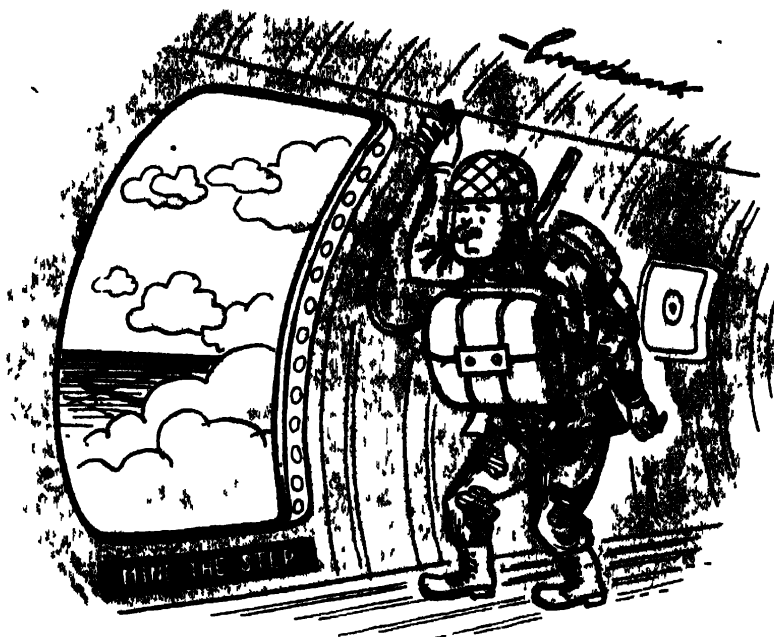




*'We've decided to move into this wing—Charles wants to be nearer his work.'*



*'Good heavens, John! how long were you missing?'*



## Annual General Meeting

THE Chairman presided and, in the course of his report on the past year's working, said:

Production has once again, despite some temporary setbacks, reached a satisfactory level. For the first quarter of the year output might well have been twenty per cent up on that of the corresponding period in 1953 but for a walk-out of three hundred snibbers in protest against the fining of a junior snackman for sharpening pencils in company's time. Reinstatement—

*A shareholder:* What is a junior snackman?

Your directors understand that he assists the senior snackmen to distribute snacks to the snibbers. Reinstatement of the aggrieved party's wage-pocket was agreed on terms which led to the immediate withdrawal of their labour of upwards of six hundred jubbing-hands, and your general manager thereupon took the unprecedented step of sacking a Mr. Croup, one of eighty full-time shop stewards in your employ. In this daredevil but necessary action the general manager had, needless to say, the full support of your directors—a support which was extended to him

in equal measure when on the following day he reinstated Mr. Croup at a wage-rate more in keeping with the spirit of the times. An undertaking signed by Mr. Croup, as a part of this satisfactory settlement, to adhere for a minimum period of three weeks to any agreements that might subsequently be arrived at between himself and the management was regarded—mistakenly, your directors think—as a direct threat to their liberty of action by the snibbers, who at once downed tools again. Unfortunately, by one of those mischances to which every industry is from time to time subject, this second walk-out of the three hundred snibbers coincided with the return to work of the six hundred jobbing-hands and the ensuing confusion at the factory gates led to some hold-up in the flow of your exports to the Far East. Taking the figure of 386,000 metric tons—

*A reactionary shareholder:* Is there no machinery for settling these ridiculous disputes?

The Company is proud to report that no less than twenty-four per cent of its entire personnel were continuously engaged in negotiations during the

second quarter of the year under review. Good results were confidently expected by your directors to accrue from this frank exchange of views between man and management, which seemed certain to pay dividends——

*Several shareholders:* Ha!

—in the long run. (*Oh!*) Certain difficulties have, however, arisen. Six assistant jig-holders, it will be remembered, were sent to Coventry by their work-mates towards the end of 1954 for refusing to join a Penny Points pool syndicate, and early in April one of these was inadvertently spoken to in the wash-house by, if memory serves, a middle-aged rotary grinding overseer. As reported in the national press at the time, the overseer was himself sent to Coventry as a punishment for his lapse by upwards of a hundred and thirty highly-skilled jiggers; but exception was taken to this by the men in the rotary grinding shop, who decided at a mass meeting held on July 19 not to speak to the jiggers until they spoke to the overseer. Sides were freely taken by other employees less directly concerned in this dispute, so that by the middle of the third quarter foundrymen were not on speaking terms with stoker-uppers, all communication had ceased between the clerical and accounting staffs, and a silence unprecedented in the history of your company reigned among the women in the sorting and packaging departments. A special vote of thanks——

*A shareholder:* Look here, Mr. Chairman——

A special vote of thanks is due to your assistant works manager, who in these difficult circumstances

devised a system of signalling by flags to facilitate co-operation between, and within, the departments. So smoothly, indeed, did this system work that, but for a lightning strike of bracket-minders in October——

*A shareholder:* Mr. Chairman, I insist——

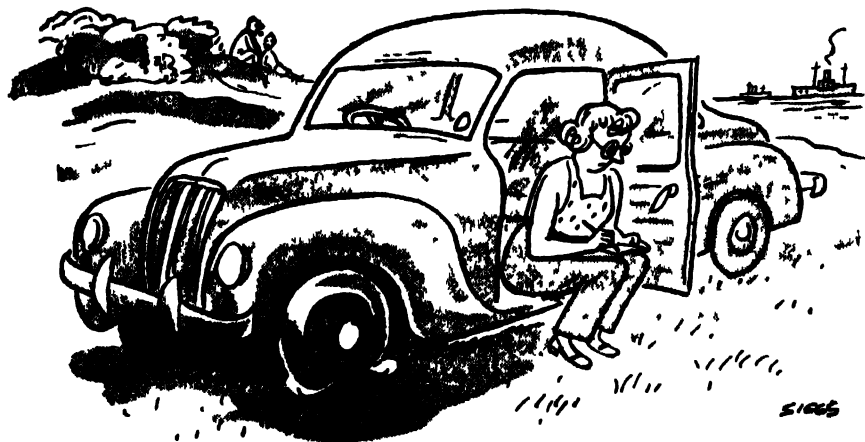
—due to an unfortunately-worded circular sent to the men by their union chiefs, a not unsatisfactory production-flow would undoubtedly have seeped through into your pipeline. An increase in freight charges of the order of seven-and-a-half——

*A shareholder, very loudly and fiercely:* Do we, or do we not, get any money this year?

Your directors are happy to announce that, despite the absence throughout the greater part of November and December of the general manager, the works manager, four inspectors, eight overseers, fourteen foremen, twenty or thirty shop stewards, and over a hundred and forty factory hands of various grades, all of them summoned to give evidence before a series of Arbitration Boards, Courts of Inquiry, Independent Tribunals, Ministerial Investigations, Mass Meetings, and disciplinary bodies of union leaders—despite some dislocation caused by these and other vital manifestations of democracy working itself out in action, your directors recommend the payment of a final dividend of seventeen-and-one-half per cent. And a Happy New Year to all our shareholders.

*Two hundred and forty shareholders:* Make it twenty, or we'll never speak to any of our directors again.

H. F. ELLIS



'Wish you were here.'





# Exiles

WHERE the out-of-fashion Kings  
Stiffly wait for their recall,  
Shuffling cards the nobles left  
Before their fall,  
There is sand as warm as buns,  
There is sea as strong as spice,  
There is cliff-fall robin-red;  
But they dice.  
Listlessly the Chamberlain  
Loses, wins and loses back.  
The view is hidden by a pile  
Of baggage black.  
Green and polished in the sun  
Gilt-trimmed convents shine like Follies.  
Clinker-built, the turtles blue  
Move by seashore stars and jellies.  
Sun flakes skin and wood and rock.  
Air stings thigh and wrist and chin.  
Prussian-blue the sea flows inwards.  
Virtue melts to sin.  
In the shuttered hotel salons  
Curtseys, protocol and snuff  
Make the heavy lagging minutes  
Warm and tasteless as a muff.  
Choice cigars and fine old linen,  
Toothpicks, monograms, bay rum,  
Fence the monarchs from the seaweed,  
From the flotsam and the scum,  
From the sharply denting shingle,  
From the gull's demanding cry,  
From the smoke on the horizon,  
From the weather in the sky.

R. G. G. PRICE



*'Wait a minute—what's this going  
to be like on the wide screen?'*





*'It came by hand, sir.'*

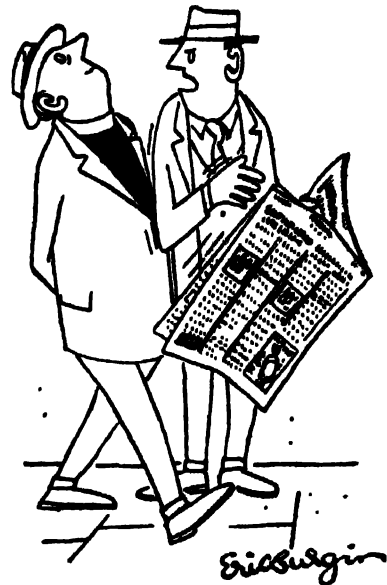
# Mildly Mad About Marlene

BE A WORK of art, or wear one. Or both. Dietrich's dress cost £3,000 and is based on an idea by Marlene. Dietrich was created by the German film director von Sternberg; he too had Marlene's assistance, but the production costs have never been estimated.

By 1932 Dietrich was showing Marlene a return of £1,740 a week, but the press still thought of her as 'the famous film vamp.' The next year her artistic authenticity was underwritten by academic connoisseur Cecil Beaton, who awarded her a golden apple tagged with the impractical suggestion that 'Michelangelo alone could duplicate her.' The title *The Blonde Venus*, following closely upon the judgment of Beaton, found Marlene dressing as a man and maternally anxious over her daughter's education. Dietrich felt it suitable for the girl to see *The Garden of Allah*, but Marlene kept her away from films about the love triangle.

The daughter grew quickly and so did the Dietrich. By 1936 Marlene was to be seen frequently in the company of the junior Douglas Fairbanks. Mobbed every time she appeared in public, she was in process of becoming a citizen of the United States, and, accordingly, earned some £50,000 per film. She has remained ever since in the solid golden apple business. At Las Vegas she is paid £10,000 a week. At the Café de Paris somewhat more than Noël Coward's weekly £1,000. Not surprisingly, then, Kenneth Tynan, a recent confidant, found her 'a sated lioness.' Wally Westmore, a practical Hollywood make-up man, less poetically observed that 'Miss Dietrich is enough to drive you crazy. She is such a kisser. She needs a new mouth after every film kiss.' Mr. Westmore concluded his analysis with the surprised observation—'I should say she is the hardest kisser in the business.' And a very prosperous business too.

To observe that Dietrich is successfully promoted is not to detract from her significance as a contemporary myth. Venus herself, in the early years of her cult, required promoting. Mankind does not recognize on sight absolute good, absolute evil or any other absolute. A certain political sense, a flair for the right contacts, a sense of timing, can help to



'Why don't you look where you're going?'

establish in the public mind the value of both transcendental concepts and important works of art.

Dietrich is a work of art of immense value, being, like all the most important *objets*, unique. Furthermore, although she is not a poem, or a painting, or an alabaster statue (so that no human force can preserve her for ever gleaming against the pillar surmounting the carpeted steps of the Café de Paris) the myth which surrounds her like a cloud of perfumed pearl dust will remain. The blonde Venus will join the Venus de Milo and the Aphrodite of Botticelli. The Dietrich will pass into the Pantheon when Marlene no longer holds the stage.

Marlene is quite pleased to be human. She hates and loves, is vain, fond of salami, is kind, cruel, humorous and entirely egocentric. Her worshippers pay Dietrich to remain the Blue Angel, but with the stipend Marlene tries to buy privacy. In London, the Oliver Messel suite (at 25 guineas a day) grows homely with the litter of signed photographs, newspaper-cuttings, sleeping tablets, sliced sausage, and sheet music. In New York, she has a small homely flat in Park Avenue where she cooks nourishing meals for her friends, all of whom must have talent and at least one secret sorrow. But it is not for the human Marlene who cooks that the crowds flock to the Café de Paris. It is the Dietrich who expects every man to do his duty and worship that they gather to see.

For a quarter of a century Dietrich has never ceased to warn the men who gather round her (like moths around a flame) that she can't help it. She has never ceased to warn them—they have never ceased to gather round her, and she never could help it—or wanted to. She accepts her fatality to the male just as she expects fading housewives in a hundred thousand suburbs and gauche girls wearing unsuitable fountain earrings to pray to her as the Madonna of undying allure (what all women—the women's papers say—absurdly imagine they would like to be to all men). So through the long night life of her sect, in unbroken descent from Salome but with resistant heads now served upon a platinum platter, Dietrich impersonates the triple Goddess, Mother, Wife and Courtesan, queening it to the repeated entreaty that she should live for ever. A sad hope for the mortal Marlene who fights mortality with poignant gallantry (and incredible success), defeated only by a wrinkle at the neck and a certain touching fragility of the fingers.

As the principal celebrant of the Dietrich sect,

Marlene is a conscious performer at the highest level of theatrical artistry. Enacting upon the podium the prescribed character of the Goddess, she is fire and ice, Proserpine and Eurydice together with a kind of sexless Cocteau Orpheus. The eyes glare or invite, the lips writhe contemptuously or lovingly or lustfully. When Dietrich bows she does so at right angles, demonstrating at once her flexibility and the authenticity of her shape. The act is complete. Applaud at a distance, dear children, that you may not be blasted by her incandescent radiance—and also because a slight distance is essential in all dramatic art (for the suspension of disbelief). A little way off, the living statue is immortal alabaster, and Marlene (the show-woman) understands perfectly spatial relationships in the field of idolatry. The act, with the dress, and the myth, is for public consumption. The full extent of the intimacy we may aspire to is properly prescribed in the rules for worshippers issued by authority.

But for those who do not adore to adore Dietrich, Marlene is still one of the best acts in show business, and deserves the applause. Behind the applause is a Marlene perfectly conscious of the burden of being a legend. She knows that for her public appearances the opalescent cloud is an essential property. She has created one tragic part which her public demands her to repeat again and again, hoping that the performance will never end—and yet (waiting for the end) speculating endlessly upon her age—and exaggerating it. *Who's Who* baldly states her birthday as 27 December 1904, but whatever the case it isn't practical for the queen to live for ever; though that Marlene is a physical phenomenon must simply be accepted. She just doesn't age at the normal rate, that's all. She looks and feels thirty-five, without effort—something strange in the metabolism perhaps, but not unique in theatrical history.

Now as she leaves for Monte Carlo, thence back to Las Vegas, her worshippers wait to applaud the next triumphal coming out of Aphrodite's débutante. 'Come back, Marlene, come back,' they call. Co-come—far away behind the applause the Jannings' school teacher, reduced to a cowering clown at the stockinged feet of the Blue Angel, still echoes faintly. The principal worshipper will always become a cowering clown who adores to adore the high heel stamping upon his bedraggled tail feathers. Dietrich wants it that way—so, you must understand, *liebchen*, Marlene simply can't help it.

WOLF MANKOWITZ

# The Rake's Progress: The Clergyman

By Ronald Searle



1. **ADVENT** Inspired (and muscular) East End vicar. Dedicates himself to reform Church of England



2. **SUCCESS** Organizes mass meeting to demand Disestablishment and Expulsion of bishops from House of Lords



3. **TRIUMPH** Hits headlines. Televised. Nation-wide interest. Health at complimentary dinner organized by Cockfields



4. **TEMPTATION** Nominated Bishop of Woolchester. Elected to Athenaeum. Introduced to convivial and sporting pleasures



5. **DOWNFALL** Goes incognito to Kempton Park during Sessions of Convocation. Spotted by Archbishop on TV newsreel



6. **RUIN** Rocket from Lambeth. Resigns bishopric. Takes Soapbox to Orators Corner. Bursts bloodvessel. Passes over

# The Rake's Progress: The Actor

By Ronald Searle



**1. OVERTURE** A horny lad, but witless. Shines in fitful tour of Private Lives. Sends press cuttings to Old Vic. Gets them back. Complains to Equity.



**2. SUCCESS** Finds old 'Stage' in the Salisbury-lands job with Donald Wolfil. Spotted by talent scout. Raised by Harold Pinter. Moves to Hollywood.



**3. TRIUMPH** Dr Johnson in musical version of Boswell. Oscar. Life story in 'Cellinis'. Man of Distinction. Sends donation to Old Vic.



**4. TEMPTATION** On location in Capri with prominent Continental Starlet. Weds. Immediate offers from Jack Hyman and Old Vic. Chases Old Vic.



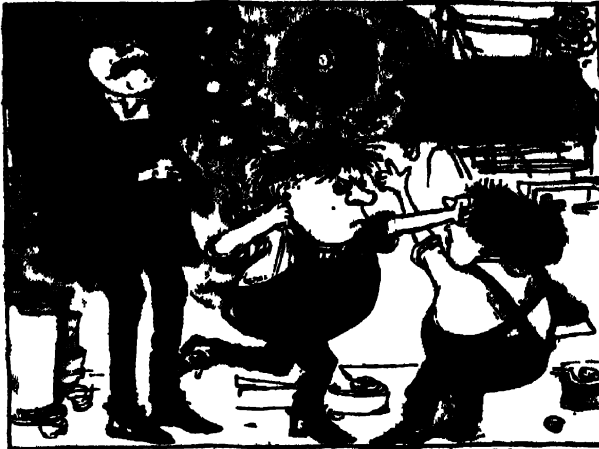
**5. DOWNFALL** Insults on Lear. Underplays in American accent. Ivo Brown carried out screaming. Divorced for mental cruelty.



**6. RUIN** Sells ex-wife's life story to 'Baville'. Starts own repertory company. Reserve Hoofbeats abundant at Theatrical Garden Party.



# The Rake's Progress: The Trade Union Leader By Ronald Searle



1. **PROMISE** Joins Union as apprentice. Blacks eye of non-union lad. Praised by father of the chapel



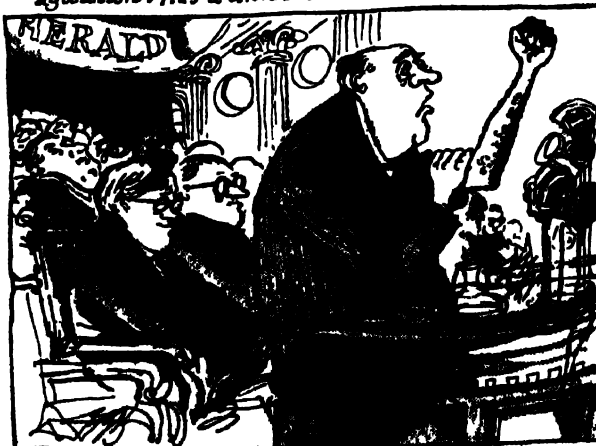
2. **FULFILMENT** Leads famous "Bot-a-nap" march. Accused of wrecking Empire by Daily Mail



3. **SUCCESS** National Organizer. Joins "Popular Front" agitation. Has a drink with Mr. Pottle, Weds



4. **TEMPTATION** Elected General Secretary of the Union. Buys first dress suit



5. **DOWNEALL** Highbred. Weeps at Party Conference. cries "These are workers' hands". Has autobiography "ghosted"



6. **RUIN** Refused American Visa. Blacks eye of embassy clerk. International indignation. Takes slow boat to China

## The Voice of Kensington

'TURN the beastly British out!  
 'Stab 'em in the back!  
 'Take the white man down a peg!  
 'Give the *sahib* the sack!  
 Hark! The vandal voices sing!  
 But, louder than them all,  
 One hears the voice of Kensington,  
 The plummy voice of Kensington,  
 The chummy voice of Kensington,  
 That *nothing* can appal:

*'Betty's off the leading-rein,  
 Peter's got his Blue;  
 Derek's building dams and things  
 Somewhere in Peru;  
 Percy's girl—the pretty one—  
 Is running an hotel  
 Miles away in Monmouthshire  
 And doing rather well.'*

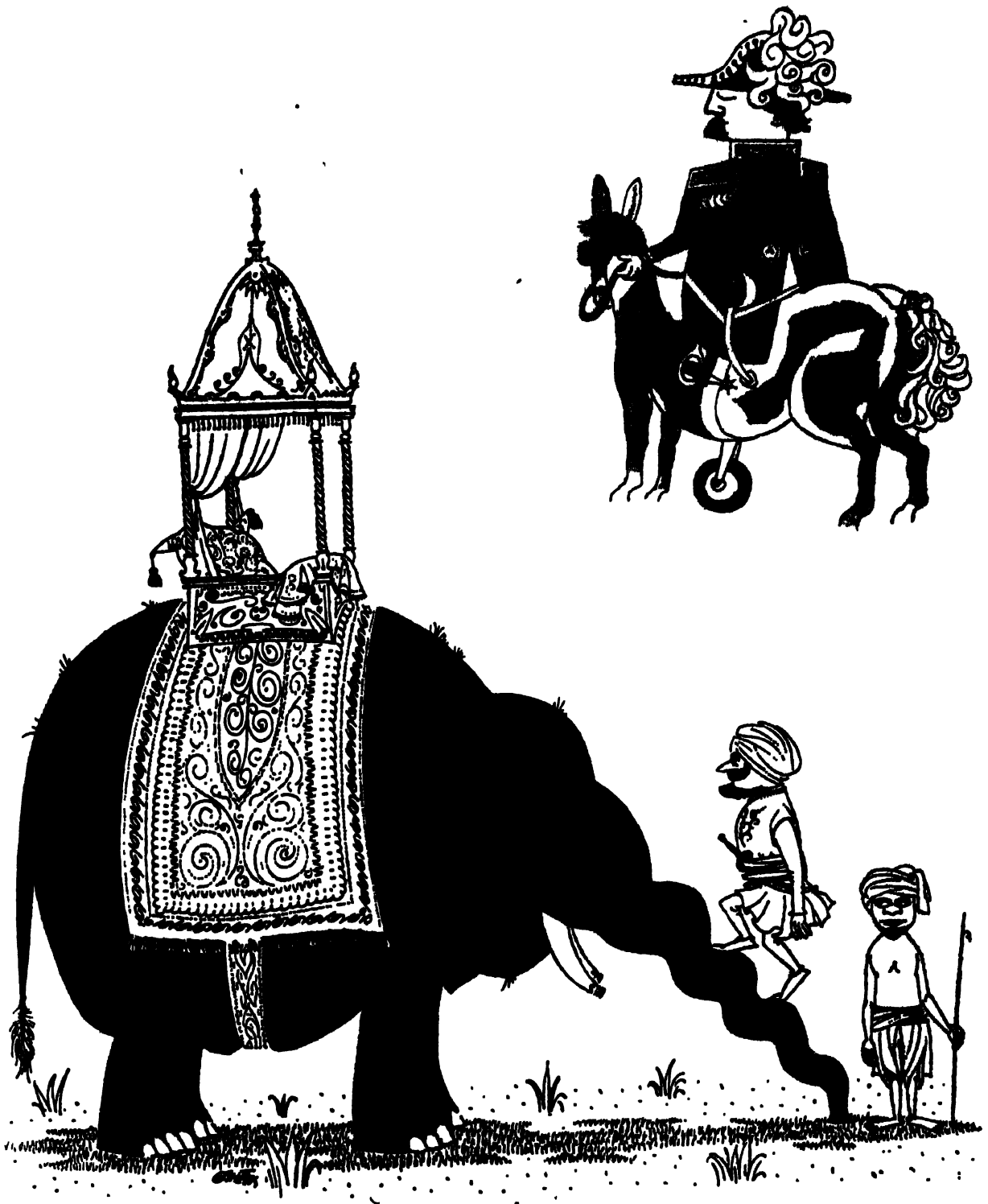
And if the mob should ever march,  
 Or atom-bomb explode,  
 Upon the Empire outpost  
 That adjoins the Cromwell Road,  
 While boarding-houses totter  
 And the massed museums fall  
 You'll hear the voice of Kensington,  
 The glossy voice of Kensington,  
 The bossy voice of Kensington  
 Rise clear above it all:

*'Brenda dear, tell Daddy  
 There's no water for his tub,  
 And say that I suggest he has  
 His dinner at the Club;  
 Then ring up Aunt Penelope  
 And tell her, if she's in,  
 We're expecting her for bridge to-night  
 And can she bring some gin?'*

Long may the voice of Kensington  
 Produce its piercing call;  
 At least the voice of Kensington,  
 The peerless voice of Kensington,  
 The fearless voice of Kensington  
 Has not a dying fall.

RODNEY HOBSON





# Put Me Among the Earls

A CRITIC, with whose name I will not sully my typewriter, was giving me the sleeve across the windpipe the other day for including so many members of the Peerage in the casts of characters of my books. Specifically, he accused me of an undue fondness for Earls.

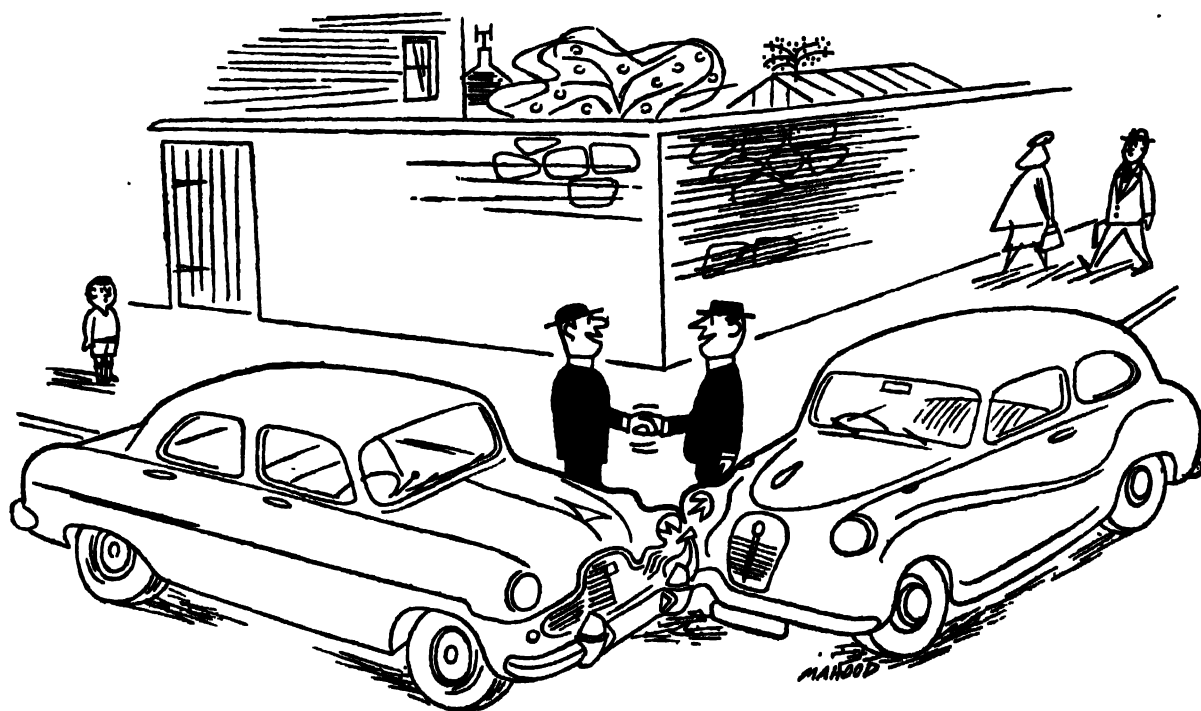
Well, of course, now that I come to tot up the score, I realize that in the course of my literary career I have featured quite a number of these fauna, but as I often say . . . well, perhaps once a fortnight . . . Why not? I see no objection to Earls. A most respectable class of men they seem to me. And one admires their spirit. I mean, while some, of course, have come up the easy way, many have had the dickens of a struggle, starting at the bottom of the ladder as mere Hons, having to go in to dinner after the Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and all that sort of thing.

Show me the Hon who by pluck and determination has raised himself from the depths, step by step,

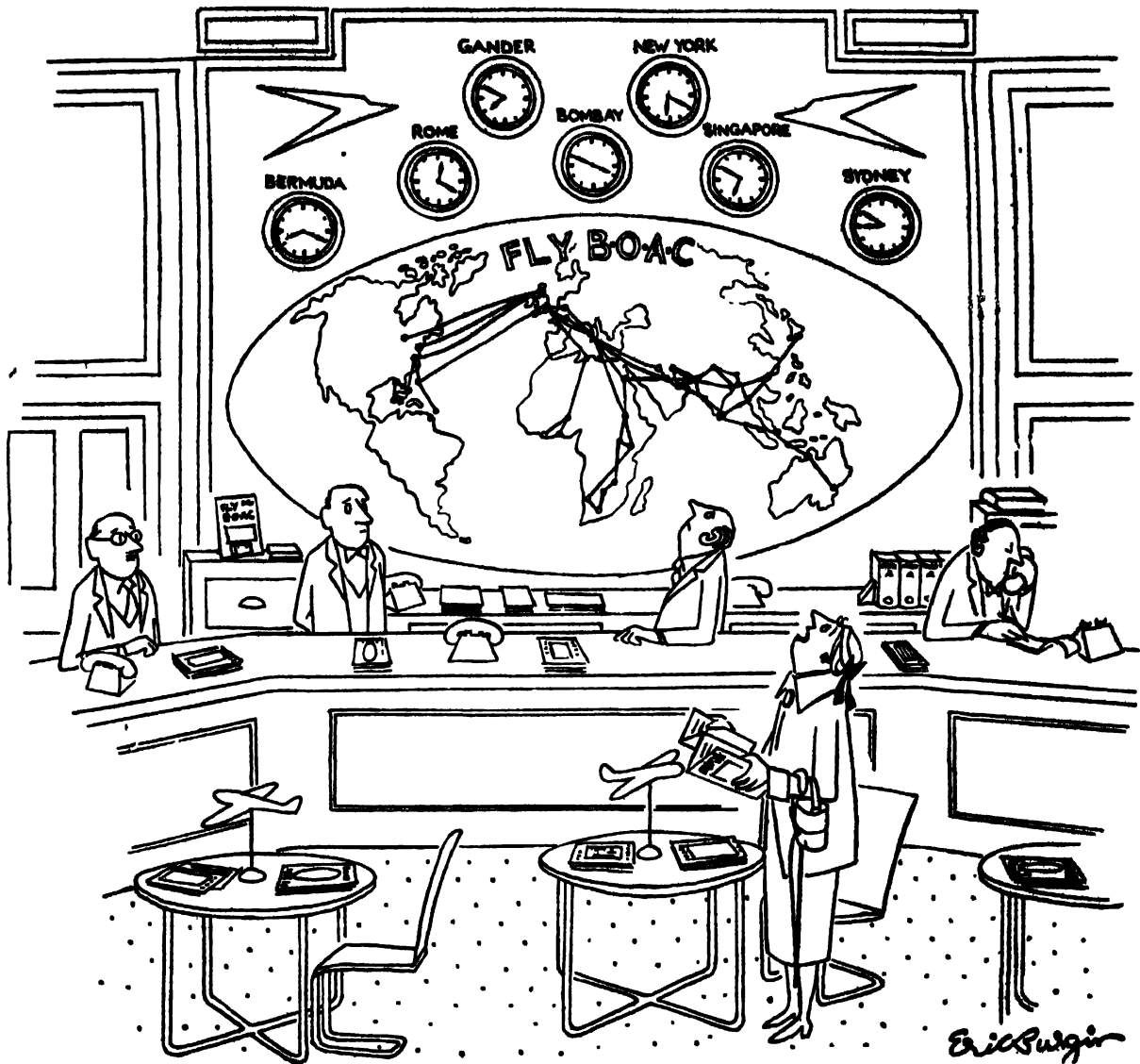
till he becomes entitled to keep a coronet on the hat peg in the downstairs cupboard, and I will show you a man of whom any author might be proud to write.

Earls on the whole have made a very good showing in fiction. With Baronets setting them a bad example by being almost uniformly steeped in crime, they have preserved a gratifying high standard of behaviour. There is seldom anything wrong with the Earl in fiction, if you don't mind a touch of haughtiness and a tendency to have heavy eyebrows and draw them together in a formidable frown, like the one in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. And in real life I can think of almost no Earls whose hearts were not as pure and fair as those of dwellers in the lowlier air of Seven Dials.

Oh yes. Earl Carroll. He caused a lot of talk in New York some years ago by giving a party at which a girl took a bath in champagne with, if I have the story rightly, not so much as a Bikini bathing-suit on. But he was not a member of the Peerage, he was a



*'And I forgive you.'*



*'My goodness, are those clocks right?'*

*Eric Selgin*

theatrical producer. (That is a thing you have to be careful of in America. Earl is a Christian name.)

Our literature, lacking Earls, would have been a great deal poorer. Shakespeare would have been lost without them. Everyone who has written for the theatre knows how difficult it is to get people off the stage unless you can think of a good exit speech. That is why, as you pass through Bloomsbury and other literary quarters, you see haggard men wander-

ing about and sticking straws in their hair as they mutter:

*'Life, dear lady . . .'*

*'Life, dear lady, is like . . .'*

*'Dear lady, I have but two objections to life. One is that it . . .'*

Than which nothing is sadder.

Shakespeare had no such problem. With more Earls than he knew what to do with, he was on velvet. One need only quote those well-known lines from his *Henry the Seventh*, Part One:

My lord of Sydenham, bear our royal word  
To Brixton's Earl, the Earl of Wormwood  
Scrubs,  
Our faithful liege, the Earl of Dulwich (East),  
And those of Beckenham, Penge and Peckham  
Rye,  
Together with the Earl of Hampton Wick:  
Bid them to haste like cats when struck with  
brick,  
For they are needed in our battle line,  
And stitch in time doth ever save full nine.  
(*Exeunt Omnes. Trumpets and hautboys.*)

'Pie!' Shakespeare used to say to Burbage as he slapped the stuff down, and Burbage would agree that Shakespeare earned his money easily.

A thing about Earls I have never understood, and never liked to ask anyone for fear of betraying my ignorance, is why one Earl is the Earl of Whoosis and another Earl just Earl Smith. I always think Earl Smith sounds a bit abrupt, almost like a nickname. I have an idea—I may be wrong—that the 'of' boys have a slight social edge on the others, like the aristocrats in Germany who are able to call themselves 'Von.' One can picture the Earl of Brighton being introduced to Earl Hove at a cocktail party. The host says 'Oh, Percy, I want you to meet Earl Hove,' and hurries away to attend to his other guests. There is

a brief interval during which the two agree that this is the rottenest party they were ever at and possibly exchange a remark or two about the weather, then the Earl of Brighton speaks:

'I didn't quite get the name. Earl of Hove, did he say?'

'No, just Earl Hove.'

My lord of Brighton blinks as if he had been struck between the eyes with a wet fish. A coldness creeps into his manner.

'You mean *plain* Earl Hove?'

'That's right.'

'No "of"?'

'No, no "of."'

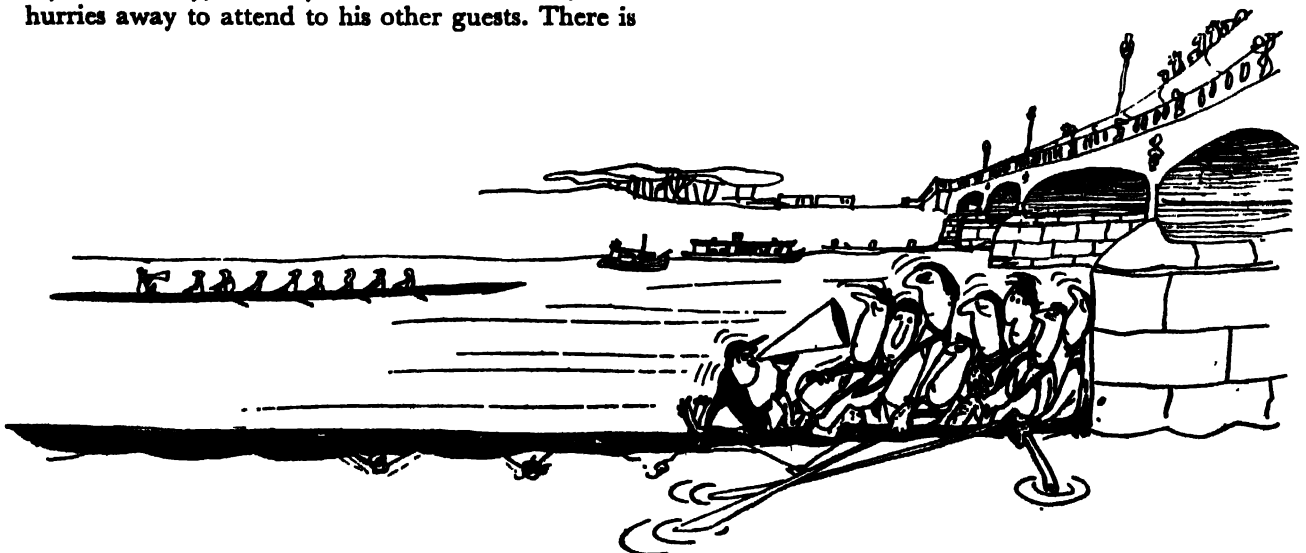
'Good God!'

There is a tense silence. You can see the Earl of Brighton's lip curling.

'Ah, well,' he says at length, 'it takes all sorts to make a world, does it not?' and Earl Hove slinks off with his ears pinned back and drinks far too many sherries in the hope of restoring his self-respect. Practically all the Earls who are thrown sobbing out of cocktail parties are non-ofs. They can't take it, poor devils.

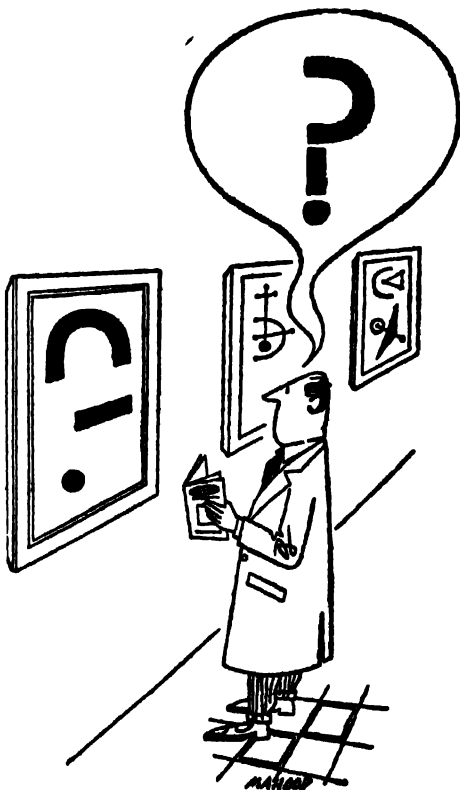
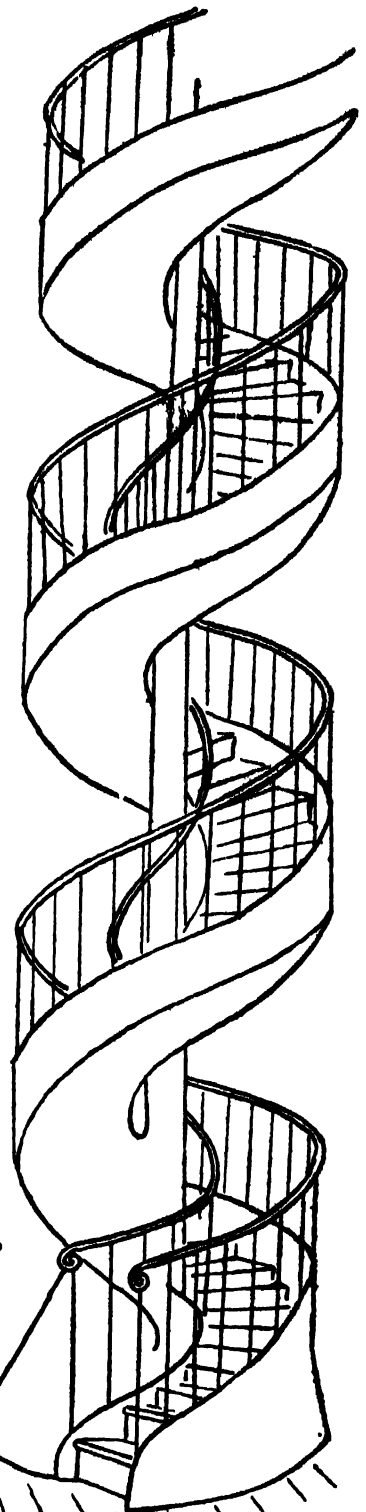
I don't think I have much more to say on this subject, though I know you would gladly have me ramble on for ever. I will merely add that in certain parts of America—notably Brooklyn—if the resident wishes to attract the attention of a visiting Earl he shouts 'Hey, Oil!'

P. G. WODEHOUSE





*'It's my nephew, sir—he's started knitting back at me.'*



*'You go straight up the stairs, then keep turning left.'*



*Eric Burgin*

## Sailors Three

*The experimental cruiser Cumberland has been navigated by radar,  
without anyone on the bridge, through difficult channels.*

SIR JASPER POCKET went to sea to fight the Spanish wars,  
And at thirty was commanding one of Rodney's seventy-fours.  
His skin was pickled walnut, his surviving eye was bright  
And was crinkled round the corners with the Caribbean light.  
His right leg had been part of the *Indomitable's* trees,  
And his left was made of logwood from the backwoods of Belize.  
He was lacerate with langrage and intemperate of life,  
Having small regard for danger and as little for his wife.  
He was on his last commission and expecting to be back  
When he died at English Harbour full of rum and yellow jack.

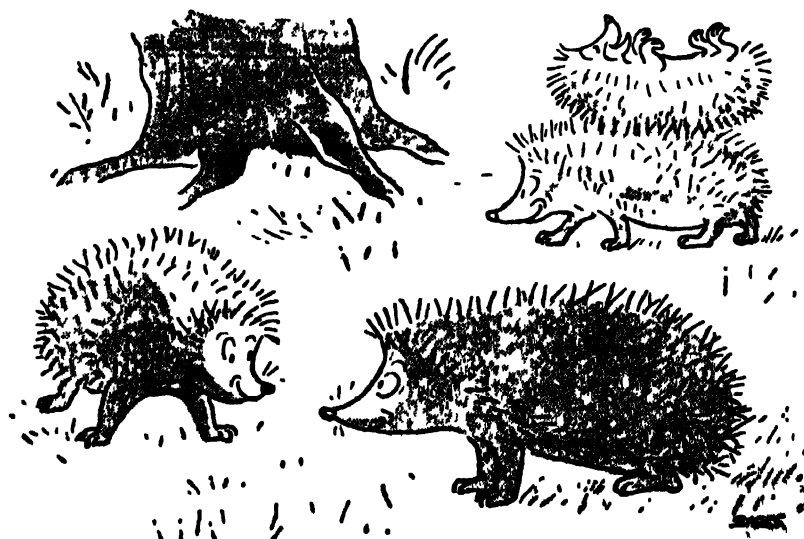
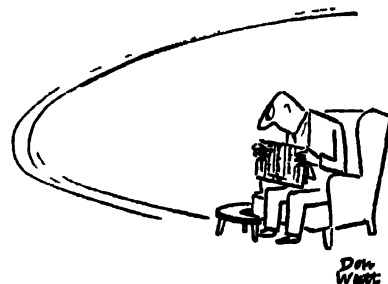
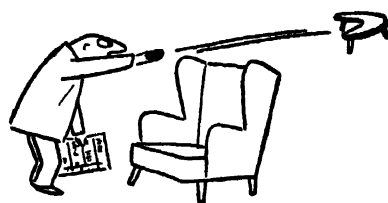
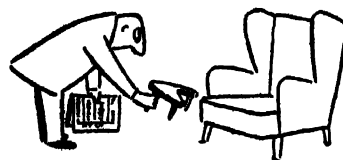
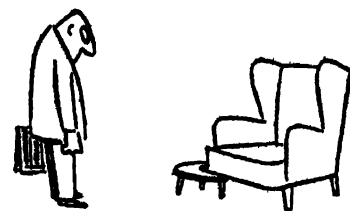
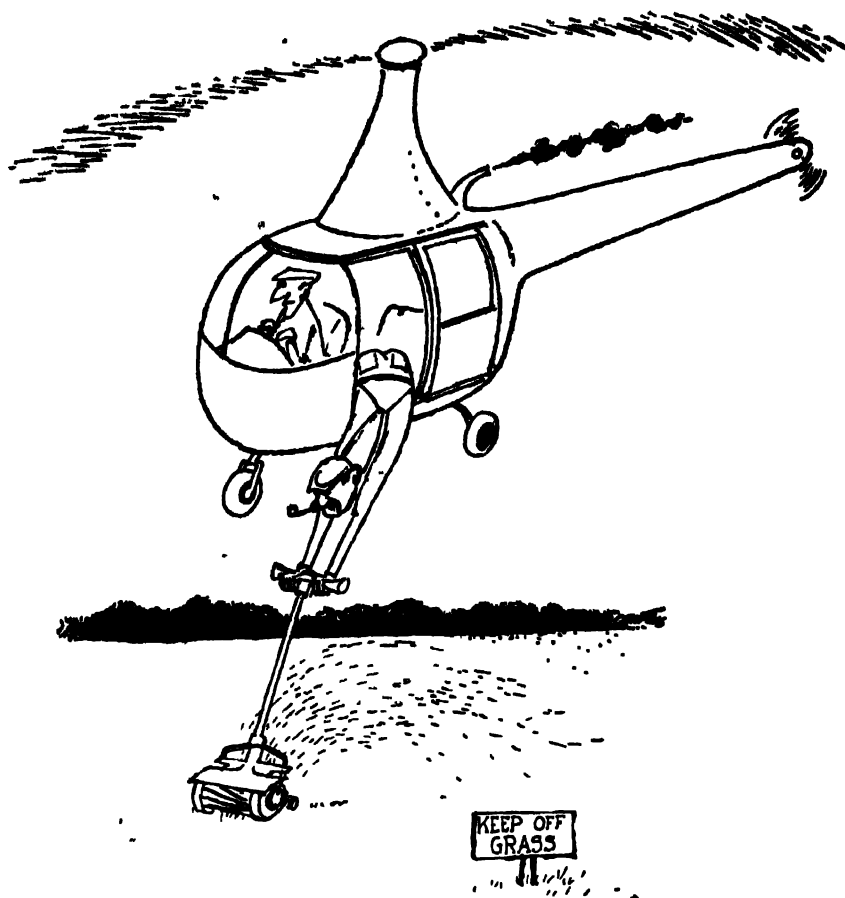
Commander Robert Pocket was a silent, serious man  
With keen and sea-blue eyes and an attractive golden tan.  
He was bred to be a sailor from the age of seven at least,  
And spent his youth in gunboats on the rivers of the East.  
He was good at mathematics, and knew all about the stars,  
And could mend or service anything from cooking stoves to cars.  
He was scrupulously neat and inconspicuously dressed,  
And his feelings for his wife were too intense to be expressed.  
He did very well at Jutland after fourteen years at sea,  
So he got promotion early, and was axed at thirty-three.

Kay Pocket saw his service in the thermo-nuclear spill,  
When he held the North Atlantic from his radar room at Rhyl.  
He never had substantive rank or any special place,  
But worked with Omar Baskowitz, the U.S. naval ace.  
He always was a brilliant boy and sure of getting on,  
And passed out first from Harwell with the Senior Cyclotron.  
He had a very pallid skin, though prematurely lined,  
And very powerful glasses with protruding eyes behind.  
He was the type of officer that very rarely fails,  
But was lost with all his outfit when the Chinks got northern Wales.

P. M. HUBBARD







'Play hairbrushes?'

# Lucky Goldilocks

THE Three Bears lived in a maddeningly neat house in a pimply suburb which straggled depressingly along the former by-pass of a small industrial town in the provinces. When Goldilocks found that the house was called 'Garmisch' she made her Lawrence of Arabia face and walked in without knocking; the bears had gone to a fiendish concert of clever-clever Bach concertos (which they called *concerti*) given by a group of nauseatingly highbrow little gnomes at the other end of the town.

Goldilocks was hungry as usual and made straight for the dining-room, which was furnished in Tottenham Court Road Jacobean with a horror-suite of sticky-looking chairs and a table with twisted legs like varnished barley-sugar. There were three plastic plates on the table, each containing a different type of American breakfast cereal.

Did she like the first sort? No in italics. Did she like the second? Far from it in capitals. Did she like the third? Not at all in 72-point Gill sans-serif heavy upper and lower case.

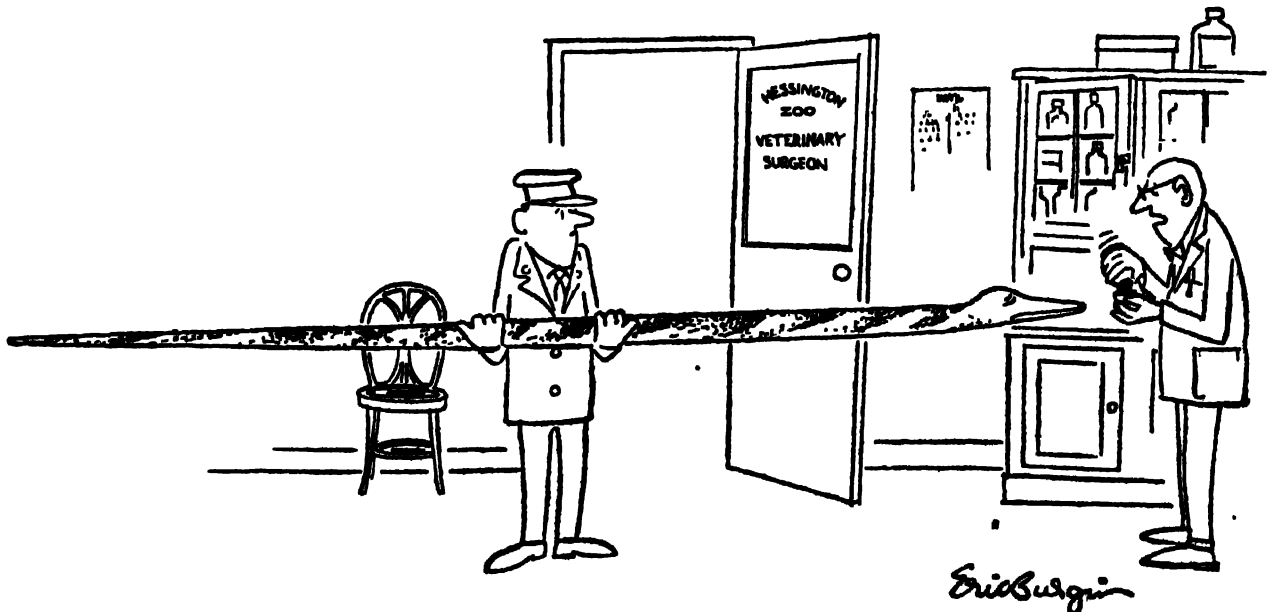
Goldilocks made her outraged cannibal face, which involved sticking out her lower lip and tongue as far

as possible and showing the whites of her eyes, and ran to the bedroom in her Groucho Marx manner. This was difficult to do going up the stairs, but she did it.

The bedroom, Goldilocks felt instinctively, was known to the Three Bears as the Boudoir. Everything was pink and frilly, and entering the room was like waking up inside a raspberry fondant. She bounced up and down on the three beds in turn, and they gave out three different but equally depressing kinds of ratchety groan.

At that moment there was a confused waffle of voices downstairs. They sorted themselves out into a bass voice which said 'Somebody's been eating my Crunchimunch,' a contralto voice which said ('fluted' was the word of which Goldilocks instantly thought) 'Somebody's been eating my Flakibix!' and a nasty piping lisp which said 'Thomebody'th been eating my Toathticrithpth!' Goldilocks made her Shirley Temple face and jumped under the biggest bed.

An uneven clumping noise grew louder and the bedroom door opened. Goldilocks realized that she could stand anything except the three-part exposit-



*'Just give him one of these tablets every four hours and no starchy food for a fortnight.'*

lation which seemed the Three Bears' favourite method of conversing, and jumped out into the middle of the room.

'I'm sorry, Three Bears,' she said earnestly, 'but I was hungry and tired, so I came here. Please don't ask me any questions . . .' Her voice faltered as she noticed that the Three Bears were wearing precisely the kind of clothes which irritated her most. One wore a nylon shirt and gaberdine trousers, the second a yellow satin dress and 'sensible' shoes, and the third (or smallest and most repulsive) a frilly short skirt and white ankle-socks.

'Why weren't you at the concert?' said the nylon bear after a short pause.

'I . . . I wasn't invited,' said Goldilocks wildly.

'You don't have to be invited,' said the satin bear. 'People just pop in.'

Yes, it would be that sort of place, thought Goldilocks, and I'll bet when it was over they had meat-paste sandwiches and coffee made from something out of a bottle. 'I'll bet when it was over you had meat-paste sandwiches and coffee made from something out of a bottle,' she said.

'You mutht have been there,' said the frilly bear in an accusing manner.

The nylon bear now spoke again. He was large and obviously accustomed to being listened to, and pitched his voice so that it carried right to the back of the hall. As the bedroom was very small, the effect was much the same as holding a competition for town-criers in an airing cupboard.

'I feel it would be for the best,' he boomed in a fruity Central Office manner, 'if you came heah to live with us and, ah, looked after the house. After all, you do appear to be somewhat at a lorn.'

Goldilocks made her Clement Attlee face and said nothing.

'We would allow you three nights off a week to do folk-dancing,' said the satin bear, 'or, of course, pottery or woodwork classes if you prefer it.'

'And you could take me to ballet-thchool in the afternoonth,' piped the frilly bear.

Goldilocks gave a controlled but vibrant scream like an impatient locomotive and rushed away to the nearest public house for a game of darts and the double Scotch to which, according to a recently initiated economy campaign, she was not entitled until the following Tuesday week.

ANTHONY BRODE





# TIME

A WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE

**Reversed Trend.** In Sturgis, Mich., chemist Henry Wispe Schultz marketed a dentifrice guaranteeing lifelong cavity resistance. Teeth of early purchasers popped out like thrown dice. Schultz plans repackaging as a painless extractor.

**Comeback.** In Woomera, Australia, British interplanetarismen launched rocket chalked 'Venus, Here I Come.' It returned hours later with addendum, 'Try It, That's All.'

**Free Show.** In Dumfries, Scotland, pants-presser Mrs. Maggie McDobie found she was receiving Lucille Ball on the polished base of her iron. Flown to the spot, U S videomen pronounced programs up to standard and without streaks, flutter or flopper. Could not answer Maggie's anxious query, 'Will it come off on the pants?'

**Sneak Preview.** In Basutoland generations of royalty have been born with hieroglyphic birthmark on calf. When reigning Ibuji submitted leg to infra-red photography in London last week, mystery script was revealed as beginning of new Eliot play.

**G.W.T.W.** In Vancouver, B C, a cyclone snatched an office block forty feet in the air, turned it through 180 degrees and set it down so gently that workers noticed nothing until leaving-time. Then all streamed out of the front door into the canal at the back.

**Sum.** In Dayton, Ohio, bi-annual Trigonometry Convention took a

beating from youngest delegate. After eight-year-old Harvey D. Beanfoot computed number of hairs in beard of Prof. John Stuffing in thirty seconds flat, meeting recessed two days for impartial check. Beanfoot was right to a hair.

**Car Trouble.** In Zurich, Switzerland, 'gasoline' pumped into motorists' tanks turned out to be milk. Cars

went better than before. Milk soon choked the food-pipes, but as he melted off with only a few more.

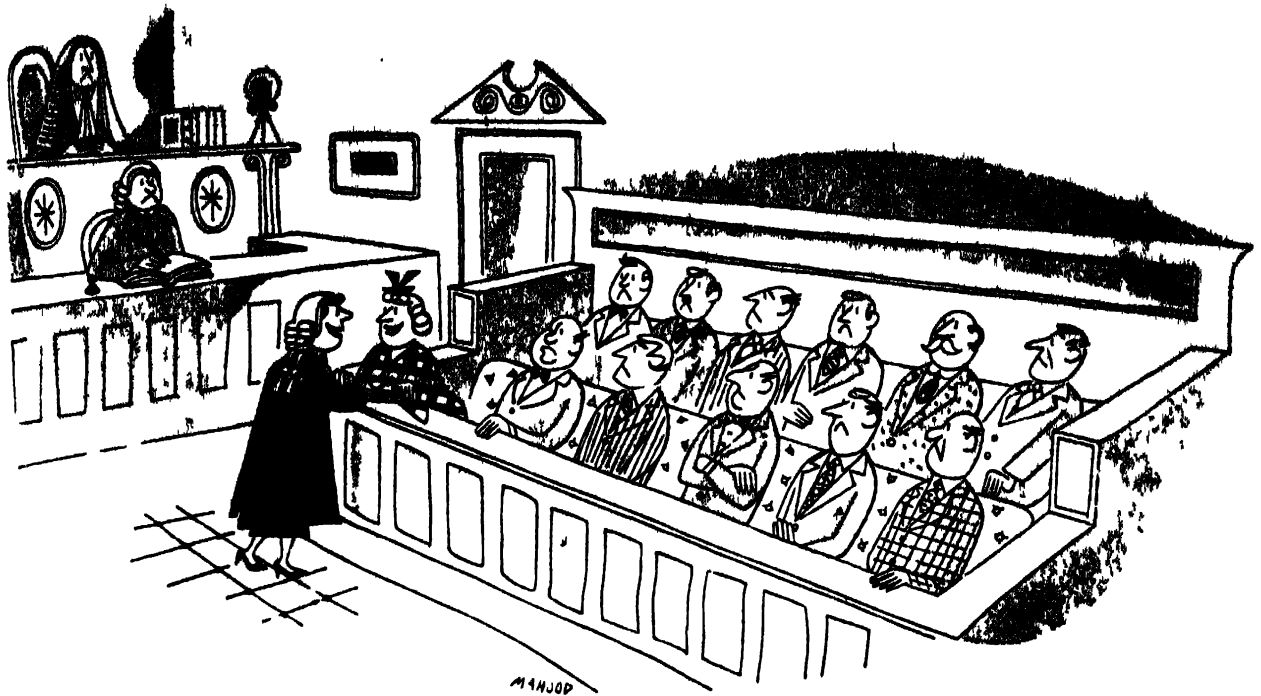
**End.** In Walnut Creek, Cal., journalist Jack Brokenhill Boothroyd, compiler of bizarre news briefs, wrote his last column, floated it in a bottle, plunged in after it, drowned.

J. S. S.

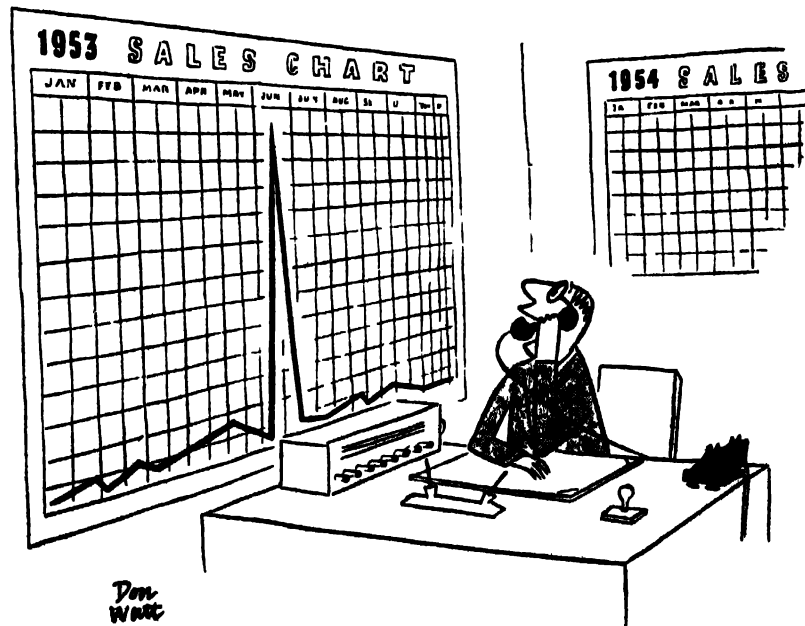


'... and we've got nice quiet neighbours.'

THE END OF 'STORY'

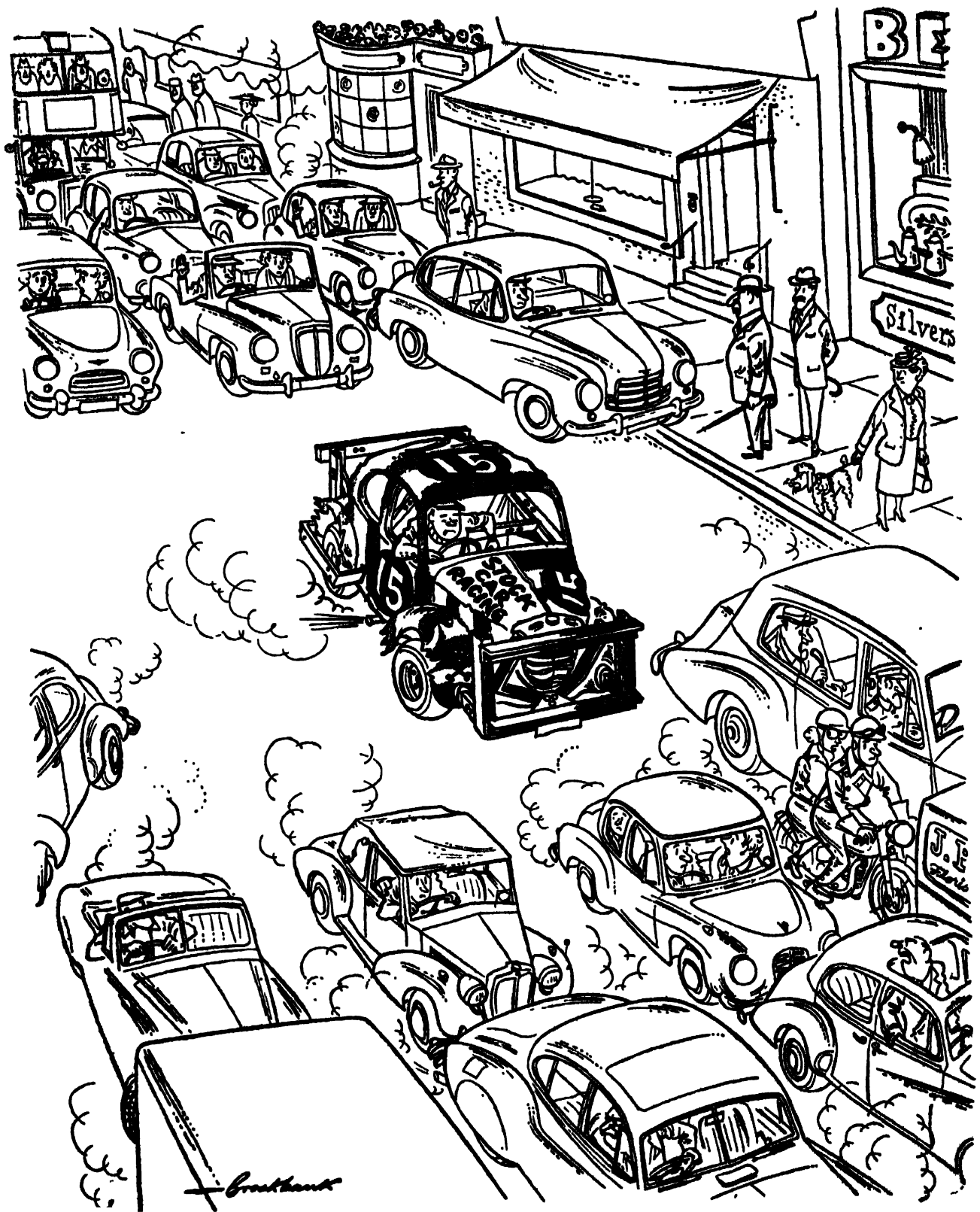


M4HJ00



Don  
Walt

'Let's see now, last year I was away in June.'





# In Front of the Iron Curtain

*The Truth about London in a Report by Members of the Cultural Mission attached to Spartak*

THERE can be no doubt that this important seaport is slowly recovering from the war against Fascism. There are encouraging signs, too, that co-existence may prove possible: we saw few armaments, and Londoners expressed only pleasure that we should want to see Marx's grave.

The journey on the 134 bus from Leicester Square to the Broadway, Muswell Hill (where we went by accident) adds considerably to one's knowledge of Western civilization. Our bus-conductor explained that the vehicles are painted red because they are manned by members of a militant trade union. He also confided that the late Queen Mary used a common brown worker's teapot, and that Sir W. Churchill, Stalin's wartime comrade, started life as a bricklayer. We passed many luxurious restaurants, where workers and aristocrats could be seen eating together openly as they watched the traffic go by. Pizza, hot dogs, 'two veg.,' mint rock, aerated bread, Italian coffee and fried skates were all available. Food is costly, however: we saw many children ravenously sucking lumps of coloured ice in the streets.

Camden Town seemed to be the London shopping centre, although some workers came farther afield, to Tufnell Park or even Archway, for the margarine, turkey, salami, green peppers, grapes, sheep's heads and frozen strawberries with which the shops are crammed. (There are five shops to every twenty inhabitants. Some merchants, unable to find accommodation, pile their wares on to carts and shuffle miserably along the gutters, a few yards at a time.)

Muswell Hill itself proved to be a busy, thriving hamlet. It is, in fact, known to Londoners as 'the Venice of the north,' and is mentioned in H. Belloc. It was a Saturday morning, and despite the rain sturdy women stood selling the *Daily Worker* (the leading paper) at street corners. Children were already crowding into the cinemas, where Hopalong Cassidy is almost as popular as in Asia. Broadway was gay with the sound of violin and trumpet as the village musicians went through their repertoire: unfortunately on that particular morning there was no Morris dancing. The churches stood encouragingly

empty, and outside the humble bread shops queues of pale women workers waited, their purses tightly clenched, their ears flashing with gold ornaments. Through a loud-speaker fixed to the roof of his car an official was issuing instructions about a forthcoming Socialist meeting. The workers were required to attend, and would be allowed to ask questions. But, as one citizen admitted to us, some people do not go to these meetings. Can it be that Queen Elizabeth is not such a despot after all?

Our bus-ride was in vain as it happened, for none of the inhabitants was sure of the whereabouts of Marx's grave. Many of them spoke but little English (a common fault among Londoners, who come mostly from mid-Europe), and we were eventually





*'All they think about is food.'*

directed to a luxurious department store. Here we spent a pleasant hour. The goods are displayed quite openly, and customers amuse themselves by moving things from counter to counter. Frocks cost anything up to three pounds. We saw one lady, evidently of Royal blood, buying three pairs of stockings at five and a half shillings a pair (about three roubles).

During the rest of our stay we were able to fulfil our terms of reference by exploring the city, learning about its culture and customs, and meeting some of its people. And what a colourful crowd they make as they throng the streets neatly dressed in saris, old Army coats with little hoods, kilts, captured American uniforms, jumpers and skirts, or turbans! We often passed quite unnoticed in our fur hats.

New skyscrapers have sprung up on all sides, notably the Pearl Assurance premises in Holborn and a large abbey not far from the Houses of Parliament.

The Abbey is nearing completion, and soon no doubt the scaffolding will be removed. Already it is used for weddings. Incidentally, it was touching to see that in spite of the empty churches the English still partly cling to their religious traditions. Many shopkeepers exhibited a bold reminder of their faith—placards reading 'Only 45 days to Christmas,' which are altered daily.

Thanks to the Ministry of House and Garden, the London housing programme has made rapid progress. On all sides one sees blocks of middle-class flats openly offered for sale at 900,000 roubles, in contrast with the older houses which change hands for the value of the curtains and linoleum. An interesting relic of British insular thought is the custom of offering a luxurious mansion as a 'sacrifice' when the owner is forced to undertake the hazards of a sea voyage.

While Britain is as nearly classless as an efficiently-run State can be, some minor distinctions must be noted. The under-privileged, of which it cannot be denied many remain, form the 'middle' class, thus leaving the bottom end of the scale for the dogs, cats, and budgerigars, which, in the Englishman's proud belief, so nearly resemble him in intelligence. Above the middle comes the 'working' class (whose merit is recognized by higher wages and superior housing and education); and higher still are placed fashion models or 'dummies' (upon which clothes are draped and pinned in the making), television performers, and the Royal Family—whose most trivial actions have almost the news value of the lighter doctrinary pronouncements of our Commissioners.

Statistics show that the middle classes marry at thirty-five to forty and have their children at twenty-three to twenty-seven. Divorce is by mutual agreement, one parent having custody of the children and the other the right to kidnap them twice a year. The average annual middle-class income less rent and tax is 5,500 roubles, from which 9,000 roubles must be deducted for school and university fees. Scholarships are only for the richer working classes. Dogs must be carried on escalators.

Politicians form a separate class. They are publicly reviled but handsomely rewarded, their wages being classified as 'expenses,' which is the highest category. For this they work night shifts in Parliament, and during the day do social work in the bazaars of the city.

It is well worth the journey by taxi to Hammer-smith (where Chekhov is performed in English) to see a typical middle-class home. Londoners are fanatical gardeners, and are already preparing for the spring by laying waste their plots and burning up the vegetation. They have a proverb: 'All the bulbs go at once,' which our smiling host (a university teacher of democratic ideology) quoted as he led us into his darkened entrance-hall. Here are stored the children's tricycles—one of the human touches which abound in these little lath-and-plaster-board dwellings. Warmth is provided by cloth 'sausages' placed between door and floor. The evening meal is brawn curry (an echo of past Imperialism), eaten from the lap. Beer and tea are drunk in great quantities from mugs donated, as a gesture to culture, by the Corporations of Worthing and New Brighton. Neighbours call in to purchase stamps to



*'I've never, in all my life, known anyone get through space boots as quickly as you.'*



*'You know the rules here, Mr. Carruthers: no ladies.'*

the value of twopence halfpenny, and the 'shared telephone,' by which two households may converse without the connivance of the authorities, is another source of inexpensive pleasure.

By contrast the working-class home is a gay and attractive place, the stores competing for their 'higher purchase' custom by offering three-piece rosewood suites, old-gold or apple-green silk upholstery, and free canteens of knives. Carpets are lavishly patterned, and exquisitely coloured statuettes adorn every niche. Education is free, rent is 'ground-nut' or 'peppercorn,' i.e. nominal, and the landlords themselves paint the front doors and tend the front gardens. Marriage takes place among workers between fifteen and twenty, by consent of the magistrates. Divorce is unknown.

We received the impression that Londoners have little time for recreation in their gallant drive for an economic foothold in the world of to-day. For instance, the Victoria Memorial (the great sports stadium outside Buckingham Palace) stood almost deserted. There was hardly even a dock strike, and so keen and industrious are the London workers that the evening newspapers are often ready for sale shortly after breakfast.

Offices present a bustling picture. The English love of home life is reflected in the thoughtful sex-differentiation of wage-rates, which gives women workers the lighter mechanical tasks, from which they are able to turn constantly to sew buttons, knit for their lovers, or telephone their little children.

On the question of the British twenty-hour week it was not possible to gain a satisfactory answer. However, the homeward rush on buses and the underground railway by mid-afternoon suggests that, in fact, justice prevails.

Gambling is forbidden by law, but wagers involving as much as £75,000 at a time are sometimes laid by criminals at football matches. The other most popular mass drugs for men are races between dogs, newspapers with pictures of women with large mammary glands and calloused bare feet, and spectacles in a theatre made out of a windmill. This establishment never closes and, apart from R.A.D.A., is the only training-ground for actors and actresses. We were forbidden to use our cameras here.

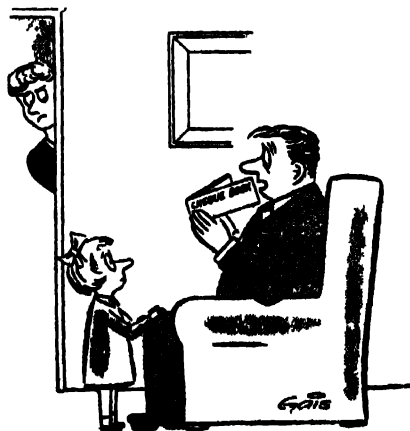
It must be confessed that the arts in London are in the doldrums. Literary magazines such as *Weekend Mail* do fairly well, but publishers are loath to issue novels, because, since most are obscene, reprisals

quickly follow in the People's Courts. Most popular writers are B. Baxter (a Member of Parliament), E. Andrews (an Irish quiz-master), K. Boyle (an aristocrat), W. Pickles (a worker), and Boccaccio. The leading artists are Sir W. Churchill and A. Munnings, who won distinction by pouring scorn on the works of Matisse.

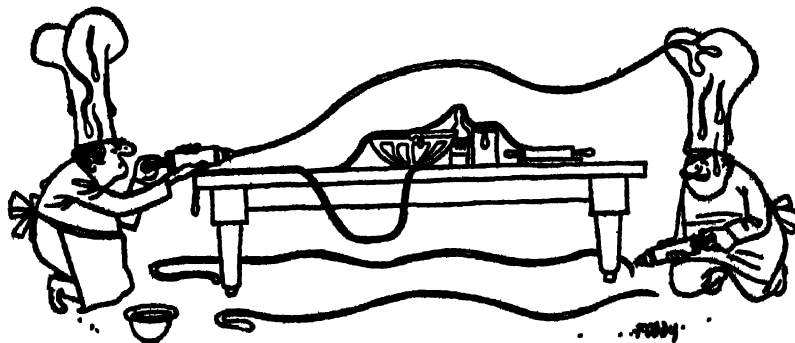
London streets are full of interest. Street markets abound. In Trafalgar Square, for example, pigeons and cameras are freely offered for sale. Then in the evening one can see middle-aged women workers taking a well-earned stroll near Piccadilly Circus, wearing their best clothes and always with a cheery word for passers-by. There are many post offices, where towards the week-end queues stand all day to buy 'postal orders' worth one shilling each—evidently, to judge from the posters prominently displayed, a form of National Saving. Other places of note visited were the Rudolf Steiner Hall, the Marylebone Public Library, and the steps of Unilever House. A river boat, with a guide to point out the Hungerford foot-bridge, took us to the Bloody Tower, an interesting link with the present.

We look forward to seeing the rest of this small but fascinating island.

ALEX ATKINSON and ANDE



*'... and then the wicked witch with a few magic passes of her hands made the handsome prince's treasure vanish in a twinkling ...'*



# Du Côté de Chez Hill

ALWAYS lots of nice stuff in the papers, of course, and as quite nicest of the current semester I nominate the story of London Gang Boss and Criminal Chief William Charles Hill, now being serially told by him to widely-loved Sunday newspaper *The People*.

It's reassuring. It's heartening. It helps us to realize that despite the difficulties and dangers still confronting us as a nation, things haven't been in vain. Mr. Hill's simple affirmation that he gets his '50-guinea suits from the Duke of Edinburgh's own tailor' is surely a sufficiently trenchant rejoinder to those faint hearts who doubt the continuing vitality of this democracy of ours.

That's fine, but, as any duke will tell you, the country wasn't built on 50-guinea suits. There's a lot more to the British character than that. It's the little things that often count for so much, so very much more, adding up to that quality which one is not ashamed, I hope, to call 'English-gentlemanly-ness.'

And here we have a statement by Mr. Hill himself. 'I have only once,' he says, looking most awfully fit in sun-glasses and shorts on the Riviera, 'shot a man in my life.'

I think we can all of us learn a lesson from that. It may, at first sight, seem to suggest an almost impossible ideal of conduct, something most of us are never going to be able to live up to, so we tend to despair, and commence shooting heavily again, weakly excusing ourselves on the ground that we're only human and we can't all be Hills.

But in the very next sentence Hill, never a man to

demand the impossible or ask others to do what he would not do himself, quietly shows the way. 'We,' he says, 'prefer razors or chivs'—specially sharpened knives—or, in a really rough house, choppers and hammers.'

And mind you, this isn't some long-haired crank, or head-in-the-clouds doctrinaire speaking. This is the considered view of a practical man.

There may be some who will feel that Mr. Hill's attitude to his environment occasionally borders on the quixotic or whimsical, as in his account of how, when reporter Duncan Webb 'was working on one of his exposures for *The People*, I was offered £5,000 to bump him off—£1,000 down and the balance when the job was done.'

Many people—but how hasty and indiscriminating many people are!—would have thrust the £1,000 into one pocket and a serviceable razor into the other, and been off to see Mr. Webb without giving the matter a second thought. Not so Hill. He had reasons, which he judged sufficient, for not accepting the offer.

In justification of his refusal, he says 'I respect Webb, and I had no time for the dirty rats he was exposing.'

His *non possumus* was firm to the point of brusqueness. 'I told the character who contacted me that I'd cut his ears off if I saw him again.'

But it is as a mender of broken homes, an averter of domestic tragedy, that Mr. Hill is seen at his genial best, combining qualities and functions of old-time curate and modern social worker.

He records—and it is a piece of statistics which will be of keen interest to many—that during the past eighteen months he has been approached by no fewer than three hundred jealous husbands asking him to put in an estimate for the job of taking their wives' lovers for a ride, and prepared to pay really attractive sums in legal tender for work well done.

Mr. Hill's method in this type of situation was generally to take 'a down payment of a couple of hundred quid or so, and forget the proposition.' In a spirit of what some may feel to be almost morbid self-criticism, if they are the kind of people who take things like that, he remarks that this could, 'in a way,' be deemed 'unscrupulous.'



However, one may dismiss that as evidence merely of hyper-sensitivity, when one learns that if the husband's proposition 'seems a fair one, I may send someone to have a chat with the victim, and get him to see the error of his ways. He generally does,' Mr. Hill is able modestly to note.

'May I come in for a moment? I'm a friend of Mr. Hill.'

'Hill?'

'Billy Hill, undisputed king of London's underworld.'

'Oh, yes, yes, yes. Won't you . . . sit down?'

'Thanks awfully. I do hope you won't think I'm butting in or anything. It is rather delicate actually, in point of fact. But I always think it's best to be perfectly frank about these things, don't you?'

'Which? What? How?'

'Well, old man, it's about your . . . friendship . . . with Mrs. Oadleigh, actually.'

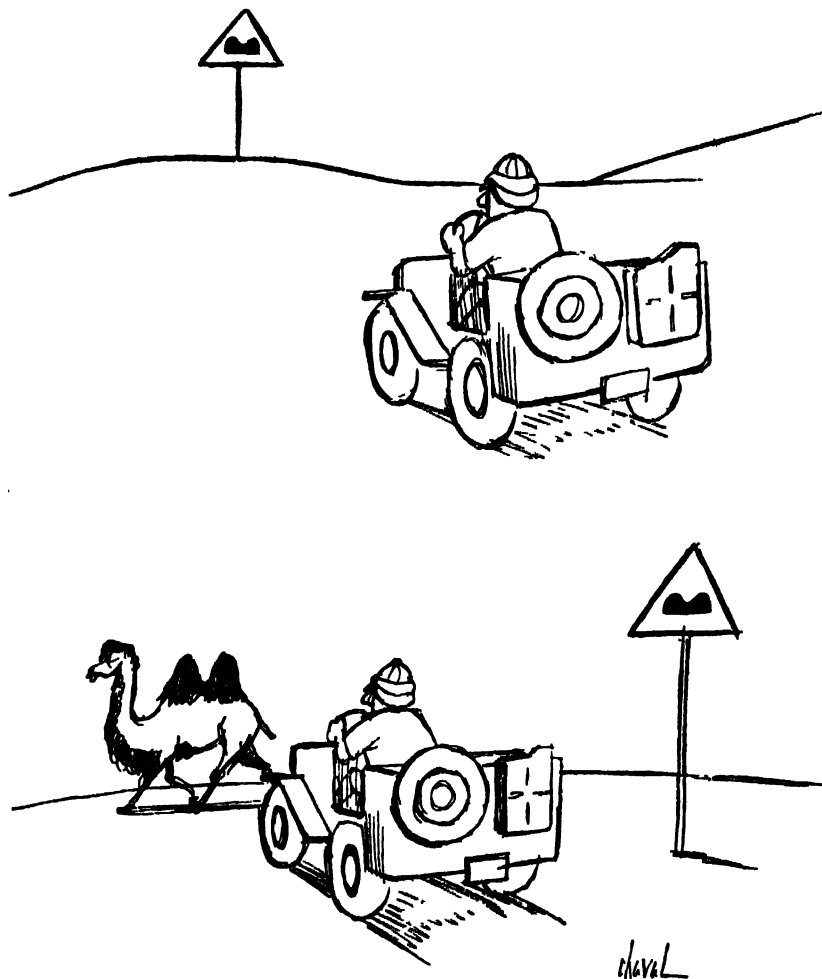
'Golly! D'you mean Mr. Hill is interested in her?'

'It's just that Mr. Oadleigh has asked Mr. Hill to act for him—quite unofficially, mind you.'

'Oadleigh *knows*? Ah well, perhaps it's all for the



*'Sunday again—I don't feel a bit like painting.'*



best. Out in the open. We love each other, I tell you. If he insists on divorcing her she and I can face the music together.'

'I wonder if you quite realize how awfully narrow minded Oadleigh is? I'd call him the possessive type. He thinks it would be so much simpler to have you bumped—not to put too fine a point on it—off.'

'But I say, look here, Mr. Hill wouldn't do a thing like that. Only shot one man in his life. He wouldn't want to spoil his score-card on my account.'

'Ha-ha! Of course not. All the same, you can't expect Mr. Hill altogether to condone, let alone sympathize, with your behaviour. I imagine he takes the view that while we may deplore the essentially primitive passion of jealousy, we are not *ipso facto*

compelled to countenance moral laxity. Too much of that sort of thing nowadays as it is, old man.'

'But we love each other—madly, ecstatically.'

'Quite. But look at it this way: Would Mrs. Oadleigh go on loving a man with no ears?'

'No ears?'

'No ears at all.'

'Oh.'

'I see you're interested in this little gadget of mine. Man in Soho sharpens them for me specially. Very old firm, conscientious, no scamped work, and you get individual attention. I hate a blunt chiv.'

But there's always a fly in the ointment, and the dark side of the whole situation is that Mr. Hill says that he is now going to retire. This is indeed disquiet-



ing news, and may be seen—particularly abroad—as a criticism of our whole system of Life and Labour. If men like Mr. Hill are going to be considered too old at forty-three, where are we?

Some will say that if Mr. Hill chooses to settle down with his First Editions, a few choice pictures, his garden and his memories, that is his affair. In my view such a course, at a time like this, savours of self-indulgence.

Suppose he does retire. Next thing you know, some coarse-grained upstart is going to take over, and people will get their ears slashed off before they have time to explain they had no idea the girl was even in Torquay at the time.

In these days when, especially in America, there is far too much head-shaking and pessimism about Britain's future, we need people like Mr. Hill, if only to convince our American cousins that there are some fields of endeavour in which the Old Country still stands pre-eminent.

And in that connection I really must take very sharp exception to the analogy—however loose and general—which Mr. Hill, in his opening statement to *The People*, seems inclined to draw between himself and Scarface Al Capone, late of Chicago, Illinois.

I cannot believe that Mr. Hill ever knew Mr. Capone personally, or that if he had done so he would have cared to compare himself to that individual.

As a correspondent of *The Times* I saw a good deal of Mr. Capone in the old days at the Lexington Hotel, Chicago—good old days, but oh! the noise and the people. I hope I shall not be accused of narrow national prejudice, or of imagining that because a thing isn't British, it's no good, if I say that I formed the very definite impression that Mr. Capone was not a particularly nice man.

Quite apart from all that monotonous shooting, he was a crashing bore, and given half a chance would boom away like a banker about the opportunities offered by the American Way of Life. His idea of a witty joke was to invite people to dinner and then shampoo their heads with champagne. Good fun in its way, of course; but a limited way.

He couldn't take a joke, either. One night his sister, who wed one of the Diamond gang, went up with a party of friends to a night club on the Lake shore to do some moonlight bathing, and the night-club proprietor, a friend of Mr. Capone, provided them all with those trick swim-suits that dissolved in the water, provoking mirth at the time.

When he heard of it, pompous old Capone took umbrage at a fancied slur, sulked for hours, and then shot the night-club man.

My point is that in the Hill country of Soho none of that would have happened.

CLAUD COCKBURN



# Sanctuary

*Two new nature reserves, one for birds and one for butterflies, are announced by the Nature Conservancy*

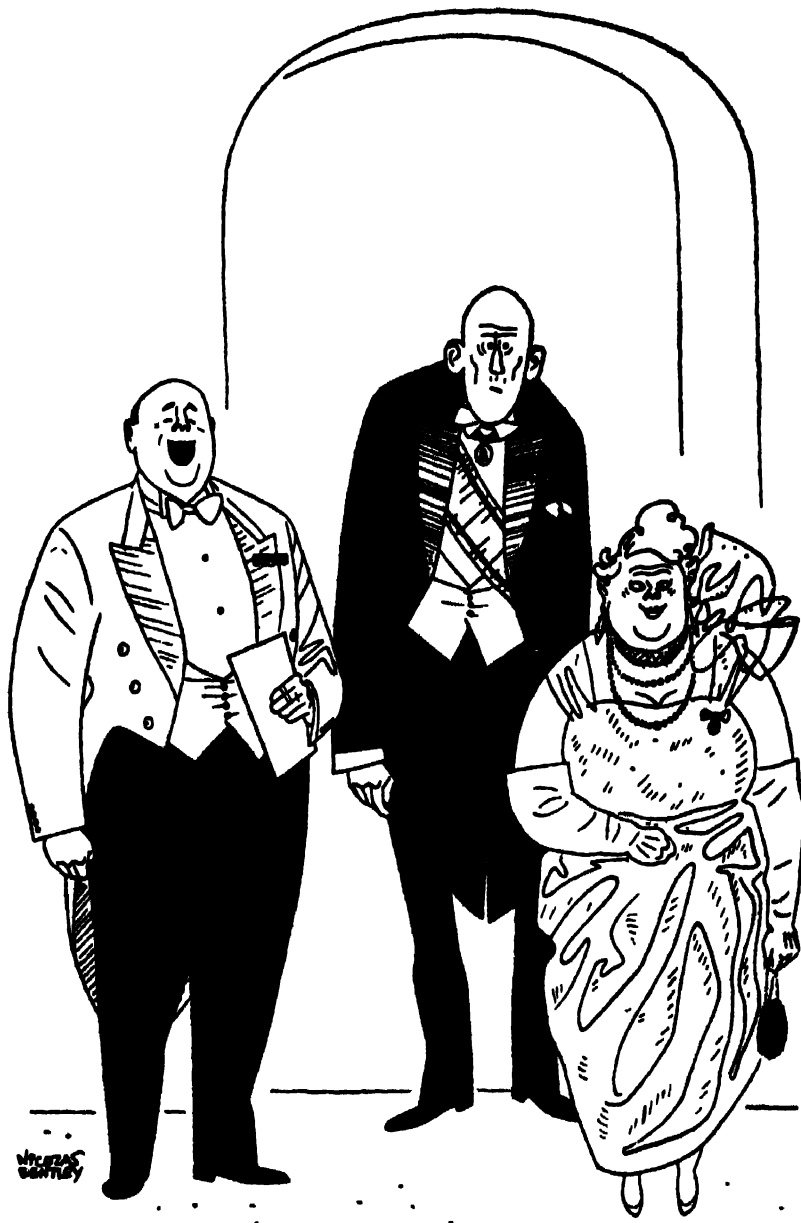
**CAN we fail to be touched by the thought  
That the pink-footed goose is secure,  
That by means of an Act  
There's a Somerset tract  
Where his numbers need never grow fewer?**

Can we fail to respond with a glow  
To the news that our butterflies rare  
Have been granted, for good,  
A Northamptonshire wood,  
And can live all inviolate there?

Can we fail to exclaim with surprise  
At this truly benevolent plan,  
Which so selflessly brings  
To small creatures with wings  
What we can't seem to manage for man?  
J. B. BOOTHROYD



***'There's a queue, madam!'***



*'The Earl and Countess of Kilkenny, and please—no laughing.'*

# Unquiet Wedding

'A WEDDING?' said the Uncle. 'How exciting!'

'It's one of my National Service lot,' the Nephew replied. 'He lives out in the Dagenham district.'

'A splendid industrial area,' said the Uncle. 'This obviously isn't one of your Old Etonian friends. May I see the invitation?'

The Nephew handed him a silver-printed card.

'Very good indeed,' said the Uncle approvingly. 'Wedding bells embossed in the top left-hand corner . . . An outsize Gothic initial . . . Reception at the Attlee Institute . . . Excellent. I do congratulate you.'

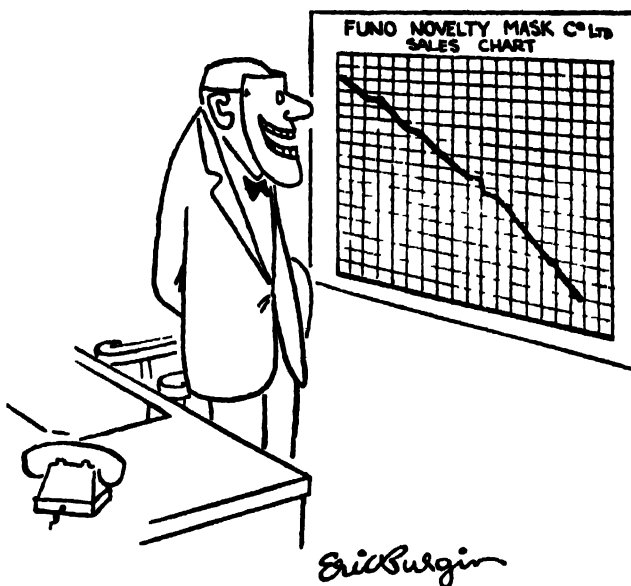
'He was my sergeant,' the Nephew explained. 'An awfully nice chap.'

'And his father?'

'He's in some works down there, I think. I have an idea he's a shop steward.'

'My boy,' said the Uncle, very impressed, 'let me congratulate you again. You've obviously been getting to know the Right People after all. Why, it took me years of buying beer and being pleasant in pubs and working men's clubs before I was asked to a Ruling Class wedding like this.'

'Ought I to wear a morning coat?' the Nephew asked.



'Definitely not,' the Uncle replied. 'You'll find most of the young men of your age, particularly the more pasty-faced ones, will be suited in a singularly trying shade of lavender-mauve; but I'd play safe, if I were you, with your best dark blue and a sponge-bag tie. One thing you must have though, is a white carnation.'

'I usually sport a red one,' said the Nephew.

'On this occasion,' said the Uncle firmly, 'it must be large and white and backed by a spray of vivid green asparagus fern. If you want to go the whole hog you can have it emerging from one of those little tin things that fit into your buttonhole.'

'I think all weddings are the absolute end,' mused the Nephew unhappily.

'Admittedly they are not as deeply enjoyable as funerals,' said the Uncle, 'but you must get it out of your head that this one is going to bear the remotest resemblance to those dreary affairs you've been to in Knightsbridge or North Audley Street—those annihilating receptions in hired houses or hotels—one tiny *foie gras* sandwich, non-vintage fizz and depressing little gilt chairs.'

'I hate all that sort of thing,' said the Nephew.

'That's why you're going to find this wedding so immensely enjoyable,' the Uncle went on enthusiastically. 'Every minute will be packed to overflowing with pleasure. One thing, though—you must be very careful at the church. There'll be at least a dozen other weddings taking place on that day (it's a Saturday, I see), and it's fatally easy to make a mistake. The trouble is that bridal parties, like Negroes and Chinese, all look so terribly alike. Why, I remember on one occasion,' the Uncle continued, 'getting right through the Wedding March, taking my place in the porch photographs, then finding myself in a hired car full of aunts and half-way to Hackney Wick before I discovered I was in the wrong show.'

'I suppose there's bound to be a lot of confetti and so on,' said the Nephew.

'Depends on the vicar,' the Uncle replied. 'The Church can be very militant about confetti. But there'll be beves of bridesmaids in iridescent rayon and Juliet caps, also hordes of uncontrolled children in fancy dress.'

'I can't see the point of bringing children,' said the Nephew.

'Quite frankly, neither can I,' the Uncle agreed.



*'Here they come—you'd better start getting up.'*

'I can only suppose they're like the coffins at Ancient Roman banquets—to remind the happy pair of the horrors that lie ahead.'

'It sounds not very different from any other wedding,' said the Nephew.

'So far,' said the Uncle, 'but once the chore of church is over and the reception begins, the pattern of pleasure will really start to take shape. You'll have to square your shoulders, peg back your face in a happy grin and go at it for the rest of the day.'

'But surely it won't last all that long?' said the Nephew.

'You'll be surprised,' said the Uncle, 'and the Attlee Institute will be a bit of a shock too. It's sure to be one of those depressing breeze-block buildings

designed, it would seem, as a deliberate architectural challenge to any kind of enjoyment. It will be used mostly for dances, so will smell strongly of cigarette-ends and stale scent.'

'You don't make it sound very enticing,' said the Nephew.

'I'm merely warning you,' admonished the Uncle, 'not to be put off by appearances. Once you are inside and have downed your third Purple Temptress Ready-Mixed Cocktail you won't notice it any more than the other guests will.'

'I always find it so difficult to know what to talk about at weddings,' said the Nephew. 'I usually find myself landed with someone I don't know and whose name I've been quite unable to catch.'

'That will present no difficulty here,' said the Uncle. 'You'll find yourself chatting happily to the strangest of strangers and, in any case, conversation will be virtually impossible because of the noise.'

'The noise?'

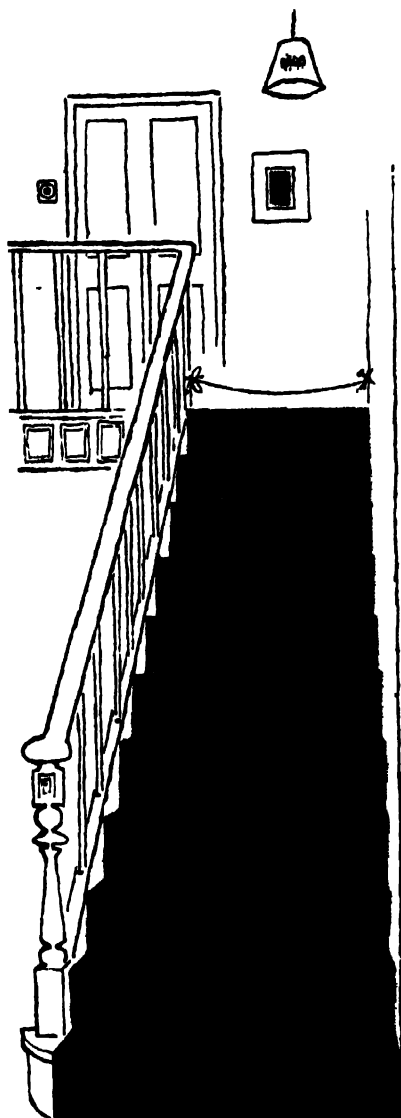
'To-day's Ruling Class,' the Uncle explained, 'have been nurtured on noise—the whirring and whining of factory machinery all day, and after that, unrelentingly and unremittingly until sleep brings oblivion, the B.B.C. Light Programme. Silence isn't golden to them, it's leaden nerve poison. That's why you'll find the radio-gramophone will be at full blast from the moment you arrive; or, as this is to be rather a swell affair, there may be a three-piece ensemble tearing off some *morceaux* of Ivor Novello. It will go on right through the ham and salad.'

'It will be a proper meal?' the Nephew asked.

'And as it will be long past two and you'll have had no lunch you'll be glad of it,' the Uncle replied. 'Only after that will the music be stilled and the speeches begin.'

'Will there be many, do you think?'

'Quite a number, but you needn't pay any attention except to be ready with a good hearty laugh for



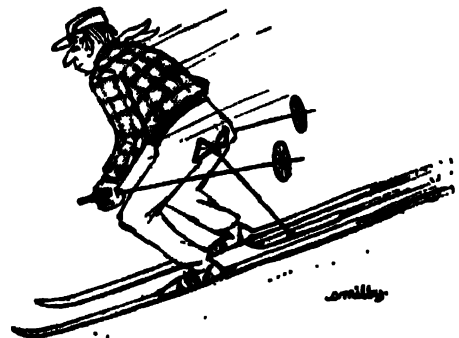


the jokes, but you can usually see them coming ten miles off. You have to be careful, though, not to let fly during the more serious passages—memories of the bride as a girl—references to the bridegroom's mother (she'll be in tears, of course), and there'll be something said about her not losing a son but gaining a daughter.'

'As she has nine other children, all girls, I don't think that will comfort her much,' the Nephew remarked.

'That won't matter,' said the Uncle. 'It's the beauty of the thought that counts. Anyway, tears will be forgotten once the dancing begins.'

'Dancing?' inquired the Nephew.



'Most certainly,' the Uncle replied, 'until midnight and after—bride, bridegroom, bridesmaids, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, neighbours and friends-from-the-other-side-of-London, all of them.'

'But surely the bride and bridegroom will have left on their honeymoon,' said the Nephew.

'Not until the following morning,' the Uncle replied. 'After all, it's their party. Why should they miss the fun? So as the daylight through the cotton-curtained windows fades and the remorseless strip-lights are switched on, Purple Temptresses will give

way to wallop (light ales for the ladies, of course). The bridesmaids will lose their Juliet caps and there will be dancing, dancing, dancing, until you've missed the last trolleybus and have to share a bed-settee with three rather drunk uncles. You'll never have had so much concentrated enjoyment in your life before.'

But the Nephew was looking perturbed.

'Anyway,' said the Uncle encouragingly, 'it will be a great experience.'

DAVID YATES MASON



*'Look what I found on top of the wardrobe.'*



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